



THE SAMOANS' BIZARRE MID-SOUTH ODYSSEY

September 1981

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# THE Wrestler

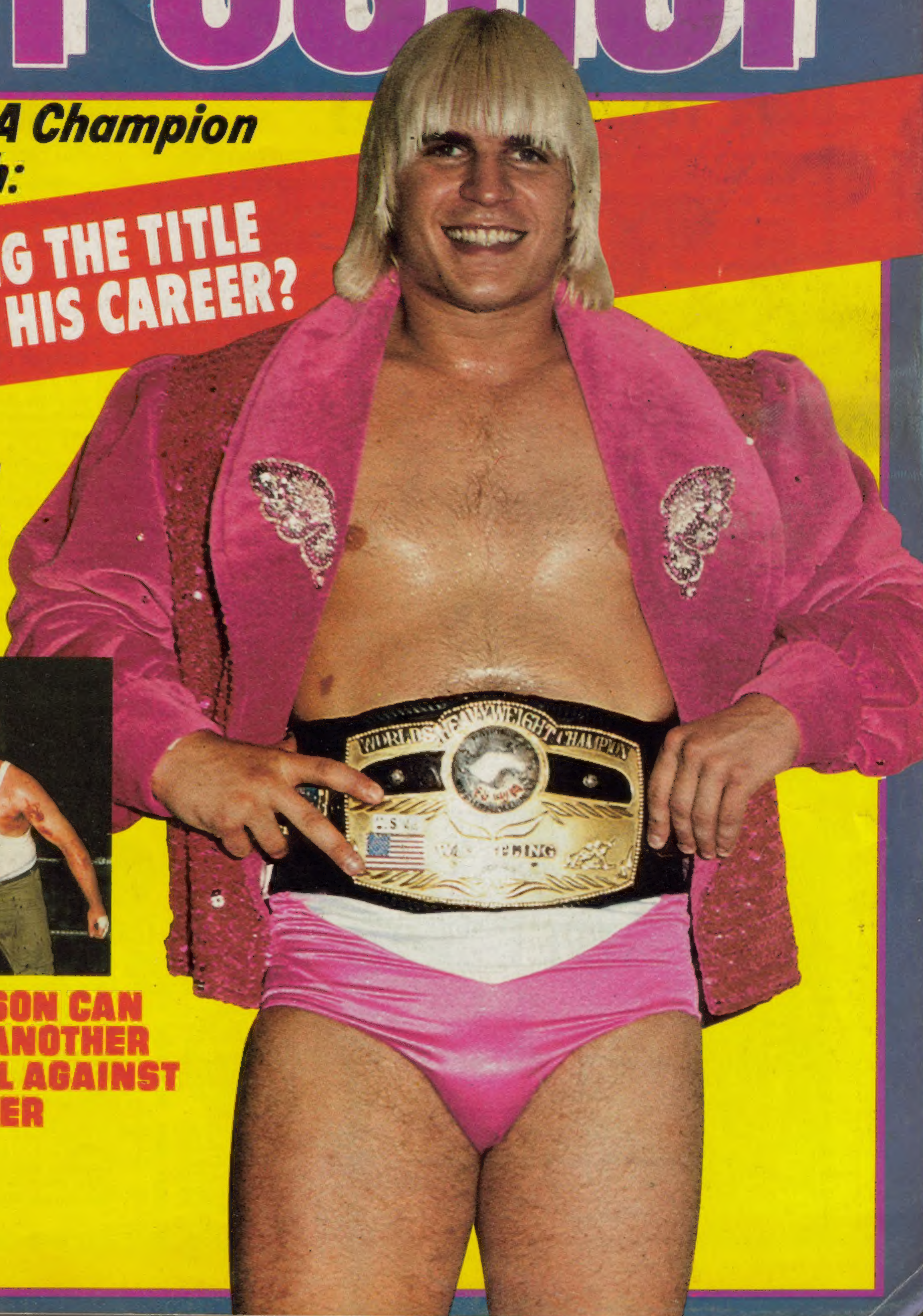
**Former NWA Champion  
Tommy Rich:**

**HAS LOSING THE TITLE  
DESTROYED HIS CAREER?**

**David Von Erich  
vs. Ric Flair:  
A SCIENTIFIC  
SHOWCASE  
TURNS UGLY**



**WHY PATTERSON CAN  
NEVER HAVE ANOTHER  
STREETBRAWL AGAINST  
SGT. SLAUGHTER**





# OFFICIAL WRESTLING RATINGS

## WORLD WRESTLING FEDERATION

- Champion: BOB BACKLUND  
 1—KING KONG MOSCA  
 2—MAGNIFICENT MURACO  
 3—STAN HANSEN  
 4—PEDRO MORALES  
 5—SGT. SLAUGHTER  
 6—KILLER KHAN  
 7—GEORGE STEELE  
 8—PAT PATTERSON  
 9—RICK MARTEL  
 10—TONY GAREA

## AMERICAN WRESTLING ASSOCIATION

- Champion: NICK BOCKWINKEL  
 1—CRUSHER BLACKWELL  
 2—JOHN STUDD  
 3—BARON VON RASCHKE  
 4—CRUSHER  
 5—DINO BRAVO  
 6—TITO SANTANA  
 7—GREG GAGNE  
 8—JIM BRUNZELL  
 9—JERRY LAWLER  
 10—ADRIAN ADONIS

## MOST POPULAR

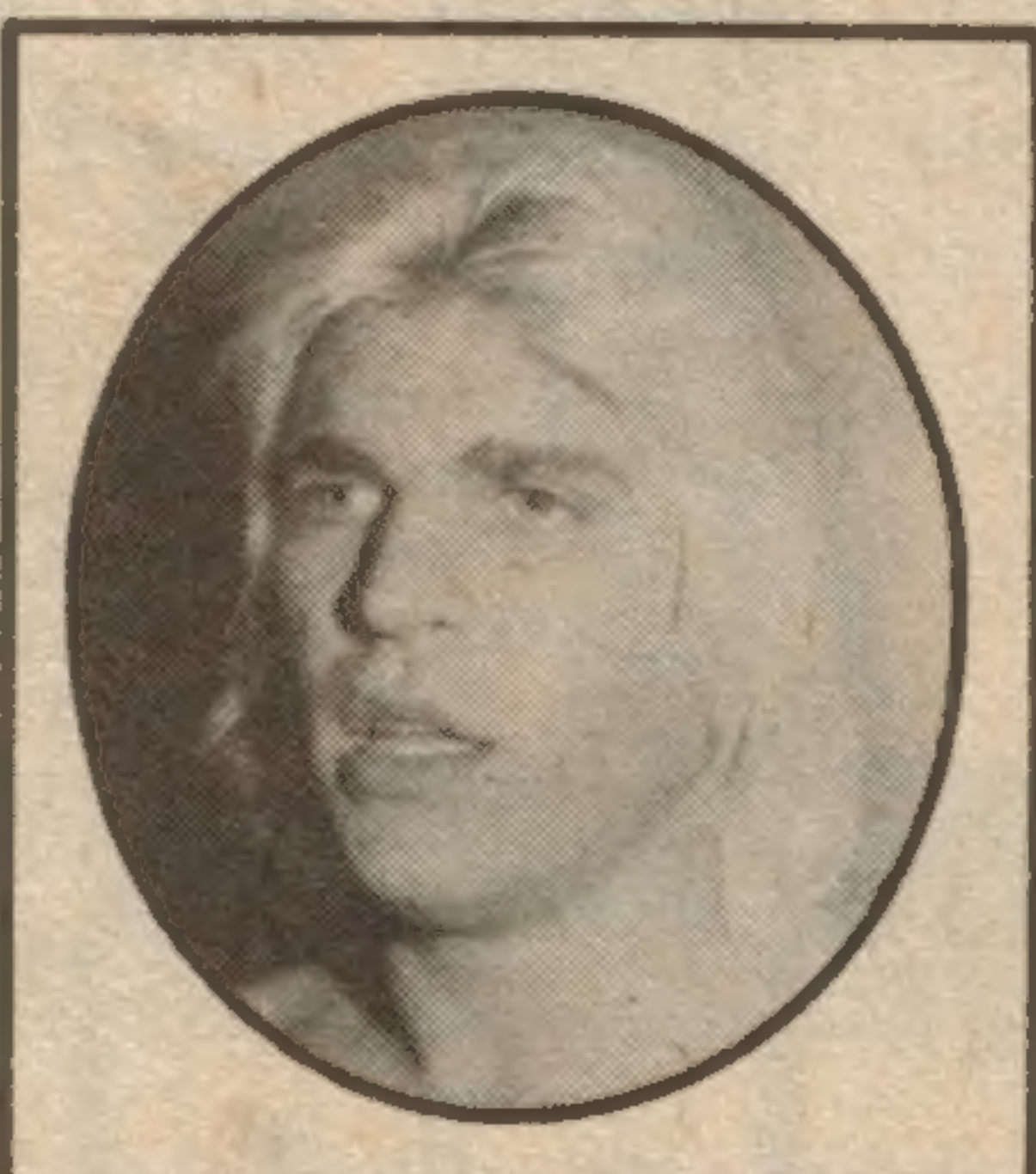
- 1—ANDRE THE GIANT  
 2—DUSTY RHODES  
 3—BRUNO SAMMARTINO  
 4—MIL MASCARAS  
 5—BOB BACKLUND  
 6—TOMMY RICH  
 7—TED DiBIASE  
 8—RIC FLAIR  
 9—TONY ATLAS  
 10—BARON VON RASCHKE



KING KONG MOSCA



NICK BOCKWINKEL



TOMMY RICH



IVAN KOLOFF

## NATIONAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE

- Champion: HARLEY RACE  
 1—RODDY PIPER  
 2—TOMMY RICH  
 3—TED DiBIASE  
 4—IVAN KOLOFF  
 5—DUSTY RHODES  
 6—JIM GARVIN  
 7—SGT. JACQUES GOULET  
 8—DORY FUNK JR.  
 9—RIC FLAIR  
 10—LES THORNTON

## TAG TEAMS

- 1—OLE & GENE ANDERSON  
 2—THE MOONDOGS  
 3—JESSE VENTURA & ADRIAN ADONIS  
 4—THE FABULOUS FREEBIRDS  
 5—MIKE GRAHAM & STEVE KEIRN  
 6—DICK MURDOCH & JUNKYARD DOG  
 7—MR. FUJI & TENRYU  
 8—ERNIE LADD & KILLER BROOKS  
 9—THE SAMOANS  
 10—MASSA FUCHI & MR. ONIETA

## MOST HATED

- 1—IVAN KOLOFF  
 2—SGT. SLAUGHTER  
 3—SUPER DESTROYER  
 4—CRUSHER BLACKWELL  
 5—KING KONG MOSCA  
 6—HARLEY RACE  
 7—MAGNIFICENT MURACO  
 8—KEN PATERA  
 9—ERNIE LADD  
 10—BRUISER BRODIE



# WHAT'S HAPPENING!

By BILL APTER

**T**HE AMERICAN WRESTLING ASSOCIATION has given Nick Bockwinkel the heavy-weight championship vacated by Verne Gagne in May. In an official press release, AWA president Stanley Blackburn stated:

"We were going to hold a tournament to determine a new champion. When the tournament was announced, hundreds of wrestlers from all over the world wanted to enter. The AWA feels that a tournament consisting of hundreds of wrestlers would take months to complete. We do not want to be without a champion for a lengthy period of time like that. So, based on his number one rating and his victories over all the top AWA competitors, we have given Mr. Nick Bockwinkel the title."

Bockwinkel and his manager Bobby Heenan were elated upon hearing the news.

"Old Man Gagne retired the belt because he was scared he would have to face Nicky and lose to him," Heenan boasted. "It is only fitting that the AWA turn the belt over to the man who everyone considered champion even though Gagne had that belt, and that man is Nick Bockwinkel. He is the greatest champion the AWA ever



The AWA returned its championship belt to Nick Bockwinkel and manager Bobby Heenan after the retirement of Verne Gagne.

had! The fans should kiss Stanley Blackburn's feet for giving Nick the title he so rightfully deserves."

Andre the Giant's leg, viciously broken by Killer Khan, is on the mend. Andre, usually the jovial type, vows to cripple Khan and force him back to Mongolia . . . The newest addition to Captain Lou Albano's "Moondog house" is named Spot. "Now I have three doggies winnin' for me!" exclaimed the Captain. "Me and my Moonies are about to *unleash* all our viciousness on the WWF. Get it? *Unleash!* Ha! The Captain's such a

joker and also, don't forget, a genius!"

Jack Brisco is a very happy man having recently broken Sir Oliver Humperdink's leg. "I put that interfering bum in my figure-four leglock and just couldn't stop 'till I heard his bones snap," Jack told us. "It really did me a world of good to get revenge on that bum for all the evil things he has done to Florida wrestlers. I consider it a good deed for the day" . . . Holding his trunks for leverage, Gino Hernandez took the Texas International Junior heavyweight title from Chavo Guerrero . . . The Southeastern tag belts are in the possession of Randy Rose and Dennis Condrey after a victory—a very sneaky one—over Bob and Brad Armstrong.

It's been a bad month for the Von Erich clan. First of all, Gary Hart went to the Texas wrestling authorities and showed them films of Fritz Von Erich interfering at ringside in behalf of his boys on several occasions. The decision—Fritz is banned from ringside when his sons are grappling. To make matters worse, Kerry lost his American title to Ernie Ladd and David dropped the Texas belt to

(Continued on page 50)



# CORRESPONDENTS Reports

**FITCHBURG, MA—Correspondent: David Brown—**Killer Khan tried to take the WWF title from Bob Backlund in one of the toughest bouts in recent memory. From the beginning, Khan was on the warpath. The challenger battered away at the



Killer Khan drives his big foot into Bob Backlund's face in an attempt to knock him off the ring apron. . . .

champion with a relentless fury. At first, Backlund appeared overwhelmed by the onslaught. Then the champion started an attack of his own. In a series of dropkicks, forearm smashes, and even a bodyslam, Backlund dominated the contest. Eventually, Backlund persevered and went on to retain his title.

In other bouts, S.D. Jones whipped Steve Savage . . . A hard, tough, and great match saw Great Yatsu get by Johnny Rodz.

If you would like your area of the country represented in these reports, while also being officially credited with your own by-line, send us reports of the matches you attend. You will have the thrill of seeing your name in an internationally known magazine while at the same time helping to improve the quality of wrestling in your area. So why not give it a try? You will be glad you did!

Send your reports to: Correspondent Editor, Box 48, Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11571.

**MEMPHIS, TN—Correspondent: Isaac Braxton—**The main event at the Mid-South Coliseum saw Jerry "The King" Lawler battle Dory Funk Jr. Funk controlled the early action with a series of armdrags



Kevin Sullivan combined with Wayne Farris and Jimmy Hart to defeat Bill Dundee, Dream Machine, and Roy Rogers.

and headlocks. Then, he peppered Jerry with a series of forearm uppercuts. This infuriated Lawler, who started punching with a closed fist. Enraged himself, Funk grabbed the cane of his manager, Jimmy Hart, and tried to poke out Lawler's eye. When the referee saw this, Funk was immediately disqualified.

In other bouts, Kevin Sullivan teamed with Wayne Farris and Jimmy Hart to beat Bill Dundee, Dream Machine, and Roy Rogers . . . Dutch Mantell, Plowboy Fraizer, and Cocoa Ware  
(Continued on page 52)



The referee tries to persuade Jerry Lawler not to use a chair against Dory Funk Jr.



# YOU ASKED US

**Here's the monthly feature which YOU get to write! It's your chance to have a top wrestler answer YOUR question! Only the best questions will be answered—so put on your thinking caps and come up with some good ones! Address your questions—and who you would like to have answer them—to: YOU ASKED US, c/o THE WRESTLER, PO BOX 48, Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11571. Questions will be answered only in this column and at our discretion!**

**Q:** I heard a rumor that Bob Backlund was going to team up with Bruno Sammartino. I would like very much for this to happen. Could you please ask them if this is true?—Lior Zohar, Westbury, NY

**A:** According to Bob Backlund, he and Bruno have no current plans to team. "I'm very busy defending my WWF title," Backlund said. "But I have the greatest respect for Bruno, and if I was going to team with anyone, I would love it

to be him." Bruno echoed Backlund's sentiments. "It would be a wonderful thing for me to team with Bob," said Bruno, "but, doggone it, my schedule just won't permit it. Maybe some day we will team."

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**Q:** I would like to know if Buddy Roberts of The Freebirds is the same Buddy Roberts who was with The Hollywood Blonds.—Darin Rork, Britt, IA

**A:** When we tried to contact Buddy Roberts to answer the question, we were informed that all statements issued by The Freebirds would come from Michael Hayes. This is what Hayes had to say: "You tell any fan who asks about us what we did before is none of their business. We live only for the present. Who we were in past lives doesn't matter." For the record, Darin, the answer is yes—Freebird Buddy Roberts used to be a member of the hated Hollywood Blonds.

**Q:** Could you ask Stan Stasiak where he learned how to use the heartpunch?—Daphne Taylor, Portland, OR

**A:** "I learned it as a young lumberjack in my hometown of Buzzard Creek, Oregon," Stasiak replied. "I used to use my fists to knock down some of the smaller trees, and before long I built up great strength in my hands. One day a mean old grizzly bear



Stan Stasiak first used his heartpunch in self-defense when he was attacked by a grizzly bear.

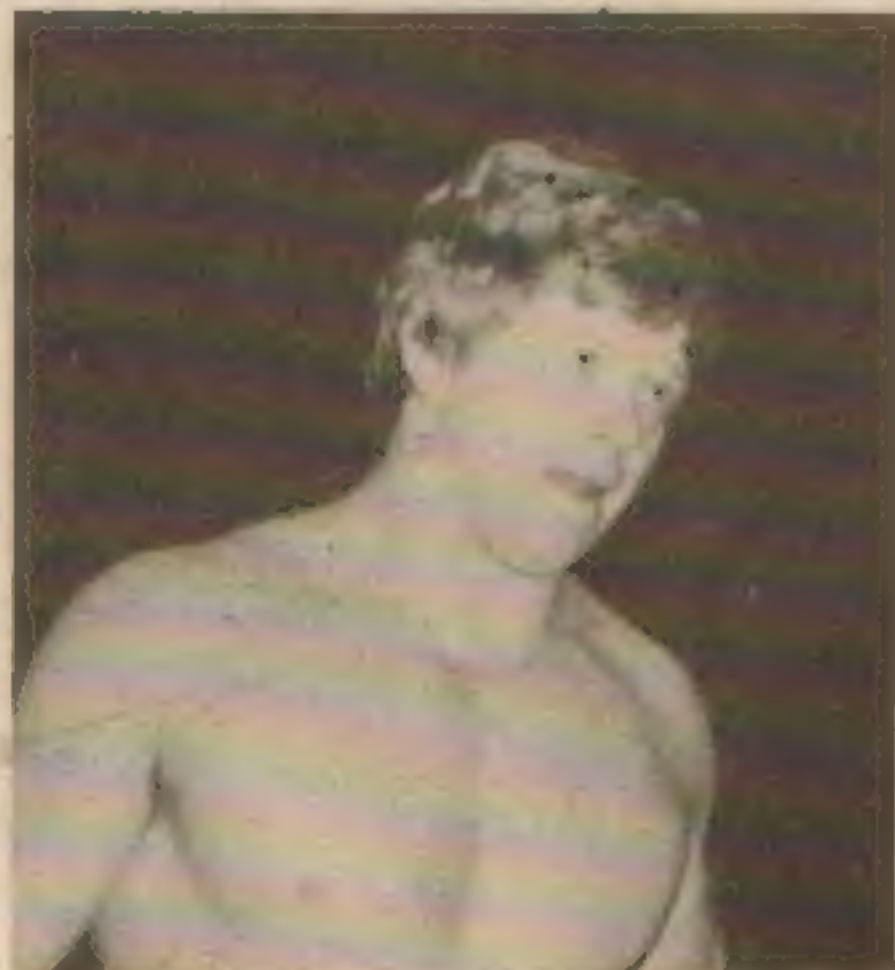
attacked me. In self-defense, I punched the bear in the heart and the big beast became unconscious. The next day I signed with a local promoter to be a wrestler."

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**Q:** I would like to know what Tommy Rich felt like when the referee handed him the NWA belt.—Arnie Yetta, Atlanta, GA

**A:** "It was a feeling of utter disbelief," Rich said. "I just couldn't believe it was happening. I remember lookin' at the referee and wonderin' what kinda mistake he was makin'. Then suddenly,

(Continued on page 51)



Bob Backlund says his busy schedule does not give him the opportunity to wrestle in tag team matches.



Every issue, this magazine praises the noteworthy and damns those who violate the spirit of wrestling's dignity. The praiseworthy are given a "thumbs up," the disgraceful are marked with "thumbs down." Here is this month's roll of honor and shame

# Thumbs Up



**THUMBS UP** to Harley Race: Though many could find fault with Race for losing the NWA title five times throughout his career, the veteran roughouser must be commended for having the perseverance and resourcefulness to win the coveted title six times. His victory over Tommy Rich puts his name alongside the great Lou Thesz in the record book. And that's handsome company.

**THUMBS DOWN** to Pat Patterson: A man of Patterson's experience should know better than to get involved in a "streetfight" with a man like Sgt. Slaughter. By doing so, Patterson is playing right into the hands of the men who are destroying the sport with their hideous tactics. A match like this might be good for Patterson, but it is bad for the sport.



**THUMBS UP** to Andre the Giant: A man who has achieved so much yet still shows a desire to improve himself is going to enjoy immeasurable success for many years. The man is Andre the Giant, and if he isn't already considered among the greatest wrestlers of all time, he surely will in the near future. Undefeated for over a decade, Andre sees better days ahead.

**THUMBS DOWN** to Jimmy Hart: This man should be heavily fined and perhaps suspended from wrestling for putting a price on the head of Jerry Lawler. Forty-thousand dollars is enough to drive a man to such extreme measures that Lawler's life is literally in danger. There is no place in professional sports for bounty hunters.



**THUMBS UP** to Victor Rivera: With the recent trend in wrestling indicating a large number of promising young scientific wrestlers turning to a life of rulebreaking, it is a breath of fresh air to see a man with as much influence as Rivera realize the wrongs of his past and come back to a life of goodness and fair play.

(Continued on page 54)

# Thumbs Down



# Q & A

Each month, **THE WRESTLER** will present a "Question and Answer" forum with an important figure in the wrestling world. It is your chance to meet wrestling's biggest stars as they answer the questions uppermost on the fans' minds



Harley Race fires a right at Dusty Rhodes, one of the four different people who have taken his NWA belt.

**Q:** Harley, thanks for taking time out to talk to us.

**A:** Well, so long as it doesn't take too long; I'm glad to oblige.

**Q:** You are certainly the busiest of the world champions, as far as number of opponents wrestled and miles traveled.

**A:** Yes. The NWA area is the largest wrestling area in the sport. I see you can't bring yourself to say it.

**Q:** Say what?

**A:** To congratulate me on winning the NWA title my sixth time. I read **THE WRESTLER** every month and each time you put a guy on "Q & A" you go out of your way to congratulate him for any little achievement. "Congratulations, Dusty Rhodes, we hear you just won the varicose veins title." Stuff like that. But me, after doing something akin to hitting 70 home runs...

**Q:** There was no slur intended. Congratulations on winning the NWA title a record sixth time. Should we also congratulate you on losing it five times?

**A:** Listen. I've heard that criticism from better men. I wrestle six times a week. That's more than 300 matches a year. And perhaps one night, one in 300, I'm not on the top of my game. So guys like Rhodes

and Rich get lucky. But not for long.

**Q:** Who do you see as the top contenders in the NWA?

**A:** Well, obviously you can't discount Rhodes or Rich. Then there's Ted DiBiase, Mike Graham, Ric Flair, a lot of tough, mean, hungry men.

**Q:** Do you think you can hold out indefinitely against their challenges?

**A:** I'd be a fool to believe I could go on forever. But wrestling is a combination of ingredients. It's not just youth and strength. It's experience, hard work, perseverance, and brains. All of those guys—DiBiase, Flair, Rich—they got youth and strength. I don't think they've got enough of the rest to beat me, at least not now.

**Q:** Does it bother you that the fans generally don't approve of your tactics?

**A:** No, of course not. You see, that's part of the experience and brains I spoke about. I've got a job to do in the ring. I don't spend my time pandering to the fans or primping or wearing \$5,000 robes. I wait for the bell to ring and then tough





## HARLEY RACE

**H**ARLEY RACE'S REPUTATION as a great champion grows every day. His recent feat of winning the NWA title a sixth time ties him with the great Lou Thesz for most times winning a world title. As a wrestler, his style is best described as scientific brawling, and fans all over the world have come to respect his talents, if not his practices. We caught up with Race in Tampa, Florida, before a scheduled defense against Mike Graham.



Rich snares Race in a sleeperhold during Tommy's first NWA title shot in 1979. Race was saved by the time limit then, but he wasn't as fortunate in April in Augusta, Georgia, as Rich defeated the veteran champion.

it out. This is a man's game. If the fans don't like it, well I'm not going to worry. I'd rather have this here NWA belt than the cheers of a billion fans any day.

**Q:** Harley, AWA champion Verne Gagne just retired. You spent many years in the AWA and had many great matches against him. Do you have any comments on his retirement?

**A:** Only that it's about time. I never liked the man.

**Q:** But certainly you have to respect his abilities.

**A:** The only ability I ever respected in him was his talent for cheating night after night and still having the fans cheer for him.

**Q:** What do you think of your WWF counterpart, Bob Backlund?

**A:** We've wrestled a few times. He's a good, strong kid, a little wet behind the ears, but talented. He could be in my class—someday.

**Q:** Harley, it's been said that there is no man in wrestling, or any sport, who can psyche himself up for one big match like you can. As evidence, they say the nights you regained the title

*(Continued on page 55)*



# INTRODUCING

**T**HE WIDE, HANDSOME face creased in a thoughtful frown, permitting the intelligent eyes to fall onto the clasped hands on his lap.

"I'll never forget my father telling me to do what I wanted, what I felt in my gut," said Kelly Kiniski, the new rage of the Louisiana and Mississippi wrestling arenas. "He told me to just go out and wrestle in whatever way I felt comfortable.

"Even though Dad liked to break heads and was a little rough," Kelly chuckled. "okay, maybe a lot rough, he never impressed his morals on me."

Dad was Gene Kiniski, notorious rulebreaker for many years. But this story's about Kelly, a young man from Blaine, Washington, who believes in the old-fashioned tenets of hard work, dedication to his sport, and to his principles.

"I always believed, growing up, that the best way to get ahead was by working yourself ragged and then working yourself some more," said Kelly. "I could never swallow those guys who'd slack off or fool around and not take their sport seriously.

"If you're going to do something right, then you should give it your all and give it your very best and work and work. That's how I feel."

Growing up in Washington, Kelly devoted himself to both wrestling and football. One year,



PHOTOS BY BILL APTER

he finished third in the state in wrestling.

"I wasn't positive whether I'd go into football or wrestling," Kelly

said.

On to West Texas State, alumnus of many brilliant wrestlers. There, Kiniski starred in

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**Son of former NWA champion Gene Kiniski, young Kelly Kiniski, has exploded onto the Louisiana and Mississippi wrestling scene. Right now he's feuding with The Samoans and Masked Grappler, but before anyone fears for the young man's safety, they should know he's poised and mature beyond his years**



# KELLY KINISKI



Though the dedication and determination of Gene Kiniski are much in evidence, Kelly Kiniski's wrestling style hardly resembles that of the former NWA champion. Kelly locks up the left arms of Carl Fergie (above left) and Afa the Samoan (above right). The 22-year-old rookie has a very promising future.

Missouri Valley Conference football as a lineman.

"Nothing got me psyched up like charging straight ahead and out-thinking, while at the same time using my brute force, like line play," said Kiniski. "At least, until I got into pro wrestling."

Kiniski debuted in professional wrestling on August 15, 1980, in Calgary, Canada.

"Man, I had chills up and down my body," recalled Kelly. "I couldn't keep anything in my stomach because I was so nervous. But I made it through that first night and realized that pro

wrestling was what I'd wanted all my life."

Kelly recalls how his father put him through some incredibly strenuous workouts.

"I'd work out with my Dad in the gym and go through a 50-minute match. Then I'd go out and run three miles. Every day. Seven days a week." Kelly rolled his eyes and grinned. "I knew that after those kinda workouts, nothing anyone could do to me in the ring would seem quite that tough."

Kelly wrestled up north in Calgary, Vancouver, Seattle, and Portland before moving south.

Right now, he's feuding with some of the craziest wrestlers in any territory. The Samoans and Masked Grappler.

"Yeah, they're mean and they're insane, that's for sure," said Kelly. "But I've been handling my own. I am real proud of what I've done so far and I think going up against lunatics like that, well, that really prepares you for a long, and I hope, a very successful career."

Kelly Kiniski, a young man with a dream, a young man with ambition, and a young man with a very bright future in professional wrestling. □



A black and white photograph of a professional wrestler, Jerry Lawler, in mid-air, diving from the top turnbuckle of a wrestling ring. He is shirtless and wearing light-colored pants. His arms are outstretched, and his legs are in a wide, horizontal position. The background is dark, and the ring's ropes and other turnbuckles are visible in the lower part of the frame.

Jerry Lawler dives from the turnbuckles  
upon would-be hitman Jim Valiant.

**BOUNTY \$40,000:  
TARGET-  
JERRY LAWLER!**



Jimmy Hart has put up the money. Austin Idol and Jimmy Valiant greedily put out their hands. Then all eyes turned to Jerry Lawler. He is a marked man. Money rests upon his forehead. These men are all-too-eager to destroy Lawler, and collect the lucrative bounty



Jimmy Hart is obsessed with ridding the sport of popular Jerry Lawler, and he seems to have the resources to accomplish his goal. Of course, Lawler is not going to stand by and watch it happen. Above left: Lawler staggers Hart with a left cross. Above right: Hired hand Jim Valiant reels from the effects of a right cross.

**F**ROM THE WAY Jimmy Hart talks, you'd think he was a millionaire.

"No, not vet," said Hart, cackling fiendishly. "But I have some extra bucks to throw around. And the way I feel, what good is money if you can't spend it on the kinda things which give you pleasure?"

Yachts, big cars, around-the-world vacations.

"Nah, that's all well and good, but there's a much better use for my dough, much, much better, a way to 'give me the most pleasure and joy I could ever have or want.'" Hart rubbed his hands together and threw back his head in a maniacal laugh.

"Destroying Jerry Lawler

Making him bleed. Watching him twitch in pain. Listening to him scream and then watching him get carried out of an arena on a stretcher, never to be seen again," said Hart, laughing. "Yeah, that's why I'm putting up this kinda dough. Forty big ones. Forty crisp thousand dollar bills to any bounty hunter who has both the guts and the desire to get rid of a hairy, ignorant bum and slime-worm like Jerry Lawler," said Hart, laughing louder.

Two men who share Hart's warped vision of the universe, Austin Idol and Jimmy Valiant, have been hired to do away with Lawler.

"Lawler?" grinned Valiant. "Hell, I'd rip his face off his head

for nothin', much less 40 grand. I consider it a public service to destroy Lawler. Of course, I kinda like the idea of gettin' money. Nothin' like combining dough and a 'good match where you see your opponent bleedin'."

Idol doesn't quite echo the words of his compatriot in chaos. If anything, he sounds even more spiteful and hateful.

"I don't like Lawler, period," he said. "I think he does nothing for anyone, that's all. I think he's a coward, that's been shown time after time, no surprise there."

"I know he's a cheat. You can see the way he cheats out there. It's pretty damn disgusting, you know? And I know, I got the proof that the man bribes refs. He's been





doin' that all his life. No other logical way he ever coulda made it anywhere near this far if he hadn't bribed and cheated and stabbed people in the back.

"But I just out-and-out hate his living, lousy guts," said Idol, slamming his locker shut.

In the Idol-Lawler match, Lawler grew so incensed he threw away the rulebook, a surprising and uncharacteristic act by a man known for his lawful aggressiveness.

And in the Valiant-Lawler match, a loser-leave-town bout which Lawler lost, he also displayed stunning ferocity.

"What the hell do you expect me to do?" shouted Lawler, hands on hips, face contorted in a snarl. "You think I'm gonna let two-bit punks like that walk all over me? Hell, I've tried to be fair and decent, but with some folk, you gotta take 'em by the ears and fling 'em around the arena a few times.

"Besides, I've had it up to here

Above: Austin Idol, who would do about anything for \$40,000, cries out from the pain of Lawler's figure-four leglock. Below: Valiant applies a headlock, but the determined Lawler will soon escape



with that creep Hart," said Lawler, flattened palm near his throat. "He's made his last threat and he's made his last bounty. He's a goner. He's not gonna get away with this. He can throw a million people at me, I don't care, I'm gonna come charging back.

"I here hasn't been a man born who can stop Jerry Lawler. I've spent my whole life climbing over the bodies of thugs who think they can get away with crap like that.

"Let Hart hire the whole damn world, see if I care? Maybe he'd like me to wrestle guys 10 at a time. Well, then I'll do that. But I won't stop and I won't rest until the filth and garbage of the world like Hart, Valiant, and Idol are destroyed. You can bet on that."

Jimmy Hart just shook his head in pity.

"Lawler's finished. Why doesn't he just realize that and get out while he can still walk under his own power?" □



# David Von Erich vs. Ric Flair: A SCIENTIFIC SHOWCASE TURNS UGLY

David Von Erich pulls Ric Flair's head up,  
by the hair, and punches him in the  
his right fist



**F**ANS AT RINGSIDE were stunned. So bewildered were those operating the concession stands that the hot dog service ceased during the match. Good thing. The huge St. Louis crowd was paralyzed with

disbelief anyway. Who can eat hot dogs when they can't close their mouths?

"You woulda thought it was Harley Race," Mitchell Krauss, a long-time wrestling fan said to his friend, Rick Schultz

"Nah, seemed more like a couple of Ken Pateras out there," said Schultz

A man behind them butted in "To me, it jus' coulda been like doubling Greg Valentine, that's how bad they were. But who

What transformed nice, albeit aggressive personalities like Ric Flair and David Von Erich into brawling maniacs in a recent match in St. Louis? At first, neither could pinpoint the reason. Finally, they discussed the disturbing explanation for this shocking brawl





Flair had no intention of using his dreaded figure-four leglock before the start of the match. But then, neither wrestler expected a brawl of this magnitude. Flair positions Von Erich's left leg (above) and then falls back with the hold completed (below). Von Erich managed to escape by getting to the rope.

woulda thought them two would go at it like that?" the ruddy-faced man said.

Indeed, who would have thought two men like Ric Flair and David Von Erich, aggressive, yet fair-minded individuals, whose reputations have been honed on the principles of decency and respect for the rules, would have succumbed to the easy lure of violence and turned this match into

"A brawl," said Flair, shaking his head, as if he couldn't believe what had just happened.

These two talented wrestlers must be accorded some fairness. They didn't race into

the ring and instantly smack each other on the head with chairs. Not in the first few minutes, anyway.

They tried to wrestle fairly, but something just popped. And that demands the question: Why?

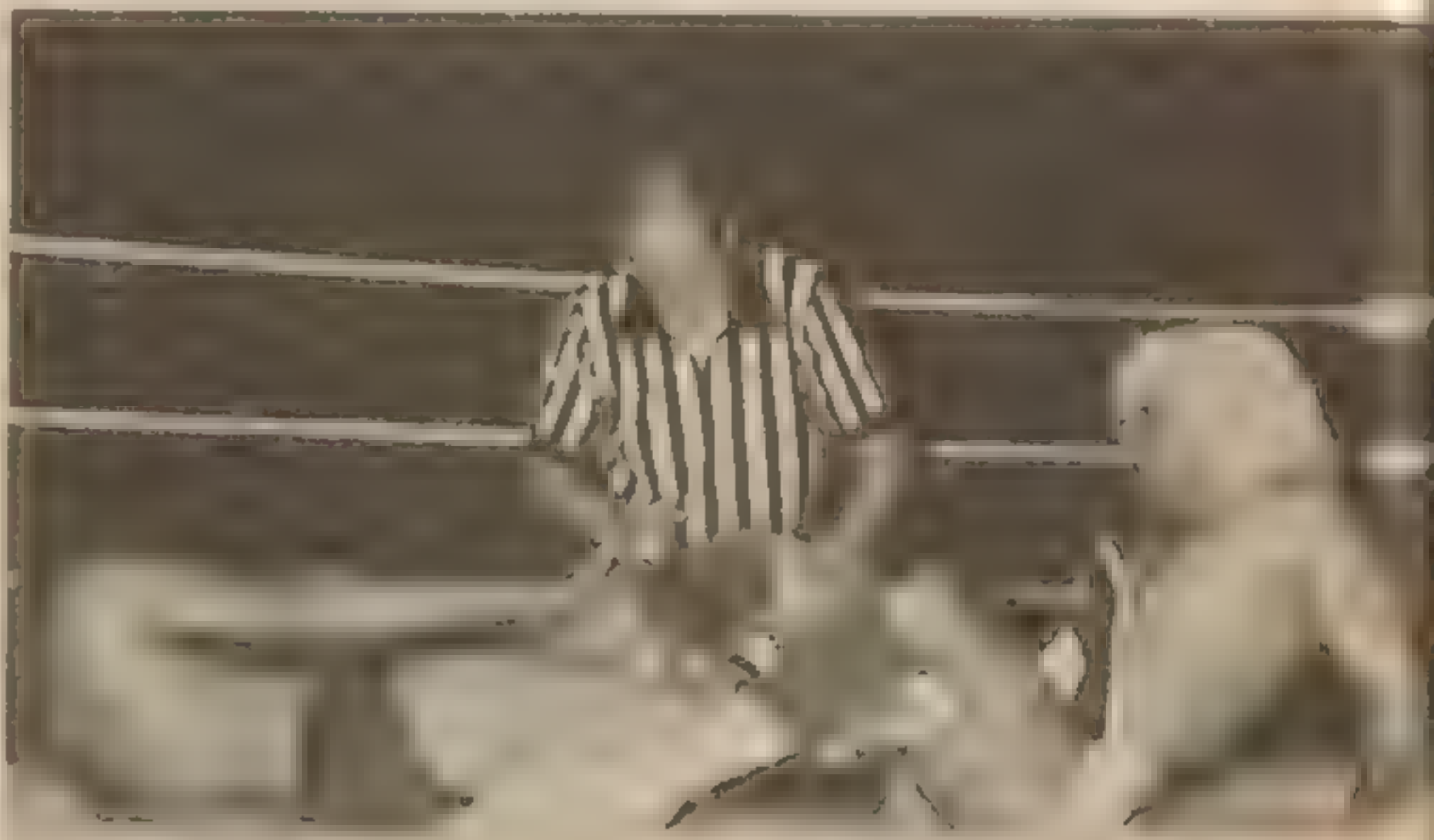
"I'm not sure," said David Von Erich, rubbing a bruise on his cheek and playing with the edge of his sweat-soaked towel. "Really, I don't know."

There is no long-standing hatred between the two.

"I fully respect and admire David, as I do all the Von Erichs," said Flair.

Yet the violence did erupt. After nearly 20 minutes of somber thought in their respective dressing rooms, the two young gladiators were able to piece together reasons, at first incoherent, until finally articulation took over.

"Yeah, I really think Ric's a heckuva wrestler," said David. "I think he's one of the real talents in the game. But, I dunno, you know, wrestling's a funny sport, really it is. Some nights you're all agitated and you know why. Maybe you're meeting a guy who you really dislike, who's come down hard on you in the past or just done some real bad things to you.





When you get to the arena that night, you're all psyched up and ready to tear him apart. But I didn't feel that way with Ric."

"I really looked forward to this match," said Flair. "It's rare I get to wrestle someone as good in scientific wrestling techniques as David. You know, it is real weird. Wrestling makes an awful lot of demands on you. It really eats you up. Maybe some fans don't understand just how intense the pressure is on us, the pressure to succeed and all the intensity of the feuds

"I've been sitting here trying to figure out why a match which should've been a fine, good match turned into mayhem and I gotta think it had nothing to do with me or David. I know for myself, it's hard to just put aside everything else happening in my wrestling life. I just can't force out thoughts of guys I hate, like Harley Race. I think once you get into a situation like that, where you've got these pressures and all, you forget who you're wrestling. Yeah, it sounds totally flipped out, but it's true. You get into the match and something happens and, and you're kinda re-stimulated, know what I mean? Suddenly you forget where you are and past hates leap up and for some time during the match, I really forgot David was my opponent. I don't know who I thought it was, maybe Race or some other creep like Valentine, but I don't know. It's really crazy."

David stood, a look of deep sadness on his face

"It doesn't please me to be involved in something like this. To be honest, I'm a little ashamed of myself," he said. "You should always stay in control. I'd like to apologize to Ric and to my fans for my conduct tonight. I hope it never happens again. I really do. I am sorry." □



From a crouching position, Von Erich fires a right that barely clears Flair's waistline (above). Von Erich, whose eyes indicate his weakened condition, whips Flair into the opposite turnbuckle (below). Neither man was quite sure why this match turned so ugly, and both were very sorry it did.





# THE HOUSE OF HUMPERDINK



**Wrestling's  
Amityville Horror**



**T**HEY ARE RUNNING crazy in Florida. Sgt. Jacques Goulet. Kabuki. The Masked Assassins. Mr. Pogo. Perhaps even deadly Superfly. All maniacs on a long, tight rein. And holding the strings is none other than sadistic Sir Oliver Humperdink.

"They're my boys, my dedicated boys, the best around," declared Humperdink, his portly body jiggling with demented joy. "I've selected this house and its occupants with great care. You can see the stamp of Humperdink impressed upon their eager little foreheads.

"I could've taken any wrestler in Florida, they all begged to join me. I had the pick of the litter," said Humperdink. "I could've taken a man like Dusty



Mr. Wrestling II finds a way to counter The Assassins' double teaming as he flips them both in one slick move

**Sir Oliver Humperdink has carefully built a house of horror in Florida. He has taken Sgt. Jacques Goulet, Kabuki Mr. Pogo, and the Masked Assassins and set them loose upon the state. What troubles many ringside observers is whether this group can be stopped**

Rhodes, he shook his fat little body until it ached begging me to manage him. He got down on his hands and knees. He had tears in his cow eyes and begged and kissed my knuckles, pleading, saying he'd do anything if I'd be his manager.

"Same thing with that turkey Jerry Brisco. He pleaded to be one of my men. So did Sweet Brown Sugar and Steve Keirn. They all want the great brilliant mind of Sir Oliver Humperdink guiding their destinies

"But I got my specifications. I have certain set characteristics that I demand of the men I manage. Remember, whatever they do in the ring reflects back on me. It's my rep out there, I'm

*(Continued on page 56)*



Sgt. Jacques Goulet, one of Humperdink's first signees after returning to the world of rulebreaking, locks up Manny Fernandez's left arm.



# *Former NWA Champion Tommy Rich:* **HAS LOSING THE TITLE DESTROYED HIS CAREER?**

PHOTOS BY MAGGIE ADKINS

The proudest moment in a wrestler's life is capturing a world's championship. Few attain the honor.



**I**T WAS THE shortest title reign in NWA history. It spanned all of five days, one successful title defense, and a heartbreaking defeat. That is the entire story of Tommy Rich's NWA championship era.

Of course, Rich can be rightfully proud to have won the title at all. It's an achievement few men ever attain. It may be the pinnacle of his career. That's what Rich is afraid of.

The anguish suffered at losing the belt so quickly has poisoned Tommy's pride. Instead of being proud of becoming champion, he wallows in self-pity for losing it so quickly. He has been reported telling one friend, "Maybe I'm just not cut out to be a real champion."

Jack Brisco, a former NWA champion, explained a couple of years ago, "To be at my best, I always have to concentrate on getting back the belt. The championship has to remain my goal. If you ever stop trying for the best, you're finished in this business. I've seen guys lose the title and never recover. Never. They think their best days are behind them and their abilities

---

Tommy Rich's name was added to the most exclusive roster in sports—a holder of the NWA title. But will the shortness of his reign combined with the agonizing way in which he lost the belt add up to disaster for this great superstar? Or can he rebound and be greater than ever? These are the questions. The answers may take years to be known





Rich wrestled at the peak of his ability, and he had to if he was going to take the NWA title from the veteran champion Tommy goes high in the air and drops all his weight on Race's left arm (above) Rich soaks up the encouragement of his fans as he increases the pressure on a headlock (below).



Rich yanks Race to the canvas with a perfectly executed hiproll. Tommy kept Race off-balance throughout the historic match.

shrivel. Once you accept you can't get the title back, you might as well quit. You'll be no good to yourself or the sport."

In public, Tommy declares he is anxious to regain the title. Every interview hears him vowing to take the title from Race. He sounds confident and determined. His friends, all of whom have requested anonymity for this article, tell a different story.

"Tommy is shook," a friend mourns. "I've never seen him like this. Even when he was a rule-breaker, and he was *down* then, it was nothing like this. He's



Rich's suplex weakens the champion considerably. The key to beating Race, he found, is perpetual motion. "If he can slow you down," Rich notes, "he'll find a way to beat you."

spooked. Have you noticed all the maneuvers he's trying? That's a sure sign of a loss in confidence.

"Look, losing the belt so quickly would shake anybody. It's your best dream turning into your worst nightmare. I expected it would get rough for Tommy. I just didn't expect it to be this rough." His friend pauses for a moment and then concludes, "But how do I

(Continued on page 58)



**T**HE NOBILITY OF wrestling was dragged through the slime. There was nothing in it that might in any way be related to athletics. Professionalism was ignored, physical grace was dismissed, and the sport's integrity was insulted. All this happened in the streetbrawl between Sgt. Slaughter and Pat Patterson.

For the good of wrestling, it must never be repeated.

The above is the almost unanimous consensus of everyone who saw the match. Fans were sickened; many were in

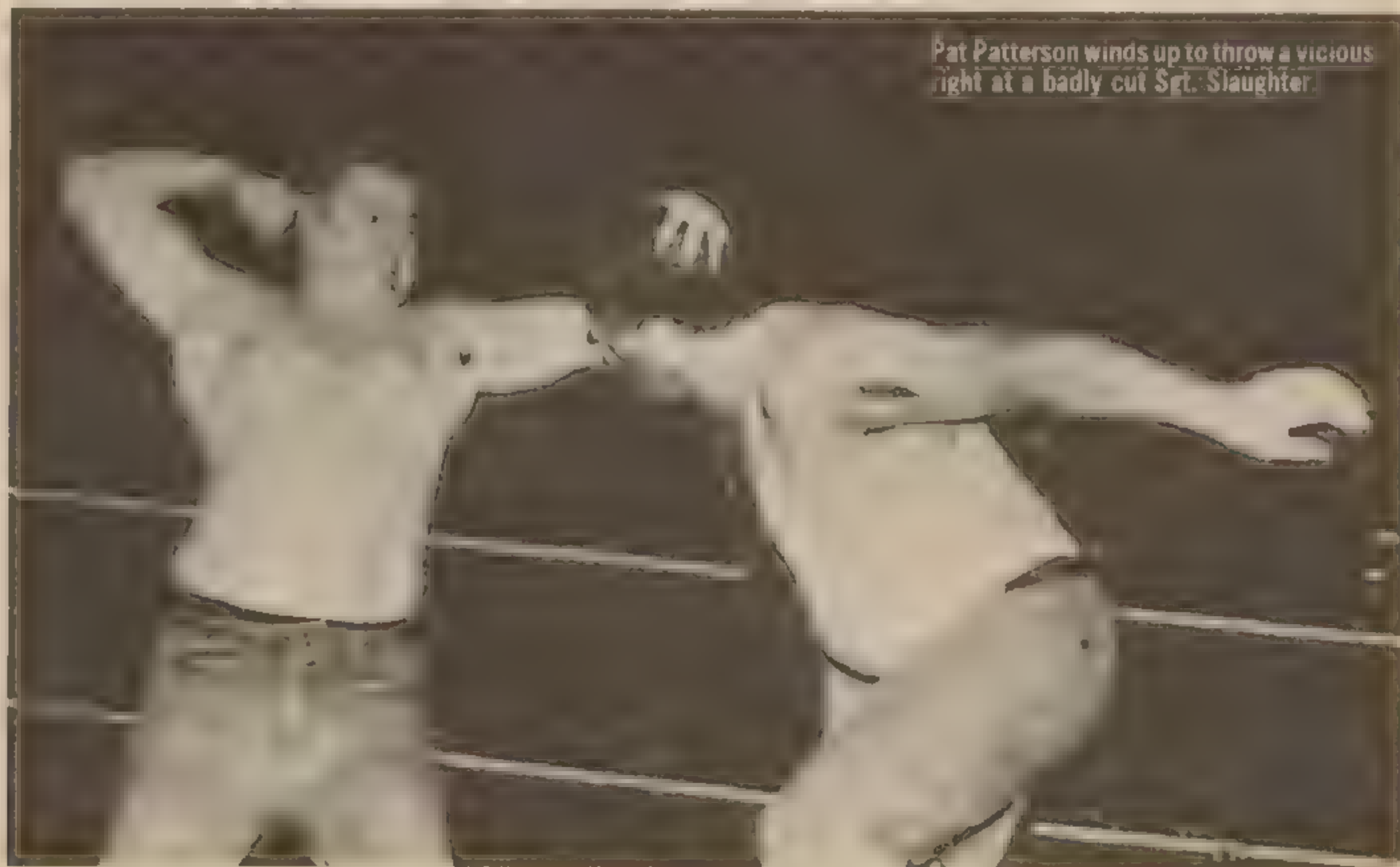
tears. The savage fury of the brawl was horrible to watch. Even Slaughter's manager, Grand Wizard, could no longer tolerate the carnage. When Grand Wizard is needed to uphold common decency, something terrible has happened.

When both men entered the arena in street clothes, everyone assumed the match would be little more than an alley brawl. The feud between the pair was well publicized. This was the match that would prove one man's superiority over the other. No holds barred, no

disqualifications, no mercy. That was the way each man wanted it.

From the first, the match exceeded even the most bloodthirsty fan's expectations. The two men whaled at each other with animal savagery. They pounded away at each other with sickening ferocity. The brutality of the action was enough to make everyone hope for a quick ending.

That was not to be the case. Within minutes, both men were soaked in blood. Scarlet gore covered their faces and bodies.



Pat Patterson winds up to throw a vicious right at a badly cut Sgt. Slaughter.

# WHY PATTERSON CAN NEVER HAVE ANOTHER STREETBRAWL AGAINST SGT. SLAUGHTER

PHOTOS BY BILL APTER



Though fans were sickened, the two men continued their horrible war. Surely, one of them would not survive the ordeal.

Finally, though both men were wearied, Patterson got the upper hand. Battling on energy born of hatred, he savaged his foe. Though his movements were lumbering and clumsy, they were sufficient. Slaughter couldn't defend himself. Actually, he chose not to defend himself. Instead, he tried to mount his own offense. It was a stupid thing to attempt. Slaughter's wrestling intelligence had been beaten out of him.

Patterson fed on his success. With a sadistic intensity, he battered Slaughter around the ring. The victim's wounds grew larger and deeper. The fans, although they despised Slaughter, hoped that the bloodbath would be stopped.

*Continued on page 62*



Patterson successfully rips out a clump of hair, drawing a flow of blood from Sgt Slaughter's scalp (above). The Grand Wizard shows concern for his bloody warrior (below). Note the brass knuckles on Slaughter's right hand.



The match might have served the individual needs of the two wrestlers by allowing them a setting to unleash their hatred for one another. But a match like this does nothing for the sport of wrestling, and many wrestlers have openly stated their outrage



Andre the Giant has accomplished so much in his brilliant career it is impossible to list all of the great man's achievements. Yet Andre believes he is just reaching his full potential as a wrestler. That is why he believes this match against Hussein Arab was his greatest ever





**A**LL ANDRE THE GIANT must do is look through his scrapbook. Not one scrapbook, for one book, like one normal sized shirt or average adjective cannot adequately convey the greatness and depth of this remarkable man's career.

Andre has an entire shelf of leather-bound books to convey and hold the mementos of his brilliant career. They tell a story, on the surface, of a man considered one of the greatest athletes, not merely wrestlers, of all-time.

But Andre will disagree. He will take issue with that point. No, it is not the hollow humility of others who seek to downplay their accomplishments while at the same time searching for praise. No.

The locker room shook with shock. If Andre hasn't even reached his full potential, then what further greatness awaits him?

"No, you know, I do not think it is something that you can say quite so easily," said Andre, measuring each word. "I am not saying that right now I am going to go out and win a major championship, it is not as cut-and-dried as all that."

"Let me explain. When I first broke into pro wrestling, everyone thought I would be a bully because of my size. As a child, I was very aware of that. I never wanted to take advantage because of my size."

"I was always afraid of being called a bully. I went out of my way to be nice to people and always extend courtesies and help them. I



Andre the Giant applies pressure to a perfect armbar as Hussein Arab looks for the correct counter. Arab needed the aid of the ropes, as he was unable to break free by brute force.

## WAS THIS ANDRE THE GIANT'S GREATEST MATCH?

nothing like that. That is not Andre's way.

When Andre the Giant lowers his flashing blue eyes and stares down, warmth and honesty floods a room. So when Andre talks about Andre, people listen. Even when it is startling.

"You know, I think I am just beginning to reach my potential as a professional wrestler," said Andre, drying himself off with two beach towels after an exhausting match against Hussein Arab in Toronto. "That is why I think this match against Arab was so important. I think I am only just now really understanding what it takes to be a successful wrestler. I think I haven't even touched my full potential yet."

wanted to be everyone's friend, even when some people called me names." For a brief moment, the intelligent eyes grew moist with painful recollection.

"Then, I carried that over into wrestling. I didn't want to be known as just a brute. So, again, I maybe held back a little, afraid of really hurting someone. Even when I lost my temper, really lost my temper, there was a part of me that held control, that did not completely let go."

"Yes, a part of that subconscious control had to do with my fear of hurting someone," continued Andre. "But also, I worried about how I would be perceived as a wrestler. I did not want people to think, well, Andre can get out of



More trouble for Arab as Andre uses his powerful hands to twist the Iranian's head. Ringside observers report Andre never wrestled better than he did this night against the hated Arab.

PHOTOS BY BRAD MCFARLIN





Above: Andre is in complete control as he holds Arab helpless in a double armlock. Below: The Giant looks determined as he slams the helpless Arab to the canvas



anything, all he must do is unleash his overwhelming strength or anything like that

"But I now understand something very important. And just as important, my fans and everyone associated with wrestling understands that Andre has more going for him than just pure strength. That I have good, solid maneuvers. That I have good speed. That I show loyalty to my friends and compassion for enemies. That I am a full-fledged, well-rounded wrestler."

Andre paused, untying a boot.

"I think now, starting with this match against Hussein Arab, I am going to let go. No, no, I am not going to go amuck, nothing like that. But whereas I worried what

people would think of me and how they would look at me, well, I have enough confidence to truly be myself

"I have matured, both as a wrestler and as a human being. I know things I wouldn't have imagined years ago. I know completely and totally what I must do in the wrestling ring.

"I look at wrestling with scared eyes. To be a superstar means much to me. Before, I was a superstar. Now I am going to show what real greatness is, how you can be decent and kind, yet be great. Yes, I am mature, and in this match, I showed the new maturity for the first time. It probably was my greatest match. But there's more to come." □



# THE SAMOANS' BIZARRE MID-SOUTH ODYSSEY



Like a brutal hurricane off the Gulf of Mexico, The Samoans have arrived in Louisiana bringing destruction and violence wherever they go. Many have tried to rid the Mid-South area of this terrifying plague. Yet none have succeeded.

**H**ARRY TROUT RECALLED the afternoon they came into his store.

"Now I run a respectable store, just selling a nice line of sporting goods and the like, nothing fancy, you can see for yourself, finally cleaned up the mess." Fulton gestured about his small, neat sporting goods store in downtown New Orleans. "It's a nice place and I

try to treat my customers nice and treat 'em fair. But I didn't know what to do when *they* came in. First thing I know, one of 'em, can't hardly tell 'em apart, starts gnawing on a basketball. Then the other one, the real ugly one, starts trying to shove a hockey stick down his throat. He woulda succeeded if'n I hadn't tried to throw 'em out. That was my big mistake.

Soon as I hollered at 'em, they went berserk and started throwing stuff around, eatin' footballs and tryin' to shove golf balls up their noses. By the time I got 'em out of the store, the place was a disaster."

Them. The Samoans. Afa and Sika. Former WWF tag team champions. Infamous for their insanity. Uncontrolled. Uncontrollable. Savages. Bar-

PHOTOS BY BILL APTER



barians. Maniacs.

Running wild in Louisiana.

They have quite literally taken the entire state by storm as they pursue their twisted goals. But why have The Samoans come to Louisiana? Is it merely for a title? Surely not, for such civilized goals as a championship never interested them before. Then why are they there?

Several people who know The Samoans best, from both sides of the wrestling ring, offer interesting and possibly disturbing explanations for their invasion of Louisiana.

"They were always the best, the greatest, the meanest, the weirdest, The Samoans, yes, The Samoans, Afa and Sika," said Captain Lou Albano, their manager during The Samoans'

WWF title reign. "Why do they do anything? They have no minds, no reasons, no nothing, all they ever were I gave them. I found them, I made them, I taught them, I showed them how to brush their teeth and how to pick tomatoes and how to use an elevator and now they're in Louisiana, a state that was named after me.

"One thing you have to know about The Samoans, you can't say what they'll do, what they'll say, where they'll end up. They have no plans, no rhyme, no reason, they don't want the greatness like I want or have, they don't want material things, they'd just as soon eat a dollar bill than buy a ring-ding with it, yup, who can tell, I wish them well, I know they'll be

successful, I hope they can remember all the Captain told them and all the Captain showed them and all the Captain did for them."

Junkyard Dog, a man of great integrity, regrets The Samoans' invasion of his beloved Louisiana.

"They aren't freaks," the Dog said. "I don't care a whit about all this poor barbarian stuff and how the Captain taught them or took care of them or how they're poor, innocent, exploited savages.

"They're completely dangerous animals who would destroy another person out of sheer pleasure," the Dog continued. "All they want is destruction. They have no morals and no principles and, to be honest, at



Afa the Samoan grabs Kelly Kiniski in a front chancery. Moments after this photo was taken, the legal hold became illegal as Afa's hands moved from Kiniski's chin to his windpipe.





Above left: Even Andre the Giant couldn't stop the Samoans' reign of terror. Here the Giant receives a knee to the midsection from Afa. Above right: Cocoa Samoa, a countryman of The Samoans, receives no special treatment as the pained look on his face indicates. Below: Afa's eyes burn with rage and intensity as he attempts to pin Kiniski.



first I was a little, well, I felt sorry for them, but no more. They're far too dangerous and they must be stopped."

Bill Watts, a top scientific star in Louisiana, has had the misfortune of witnessing The Samoans' brutal ring attacks.

"They are really vicious," said Watts. "They get this real deranged expression on their faces when they're about to wrench a man's limbs out of his socket. I think the guys down here will take care of them, though. You just wait and see. We have ways of dealing with them."

Masked Grappler, a man with a considerable reputation for cruelty, finds The Samoans spiritual kin.

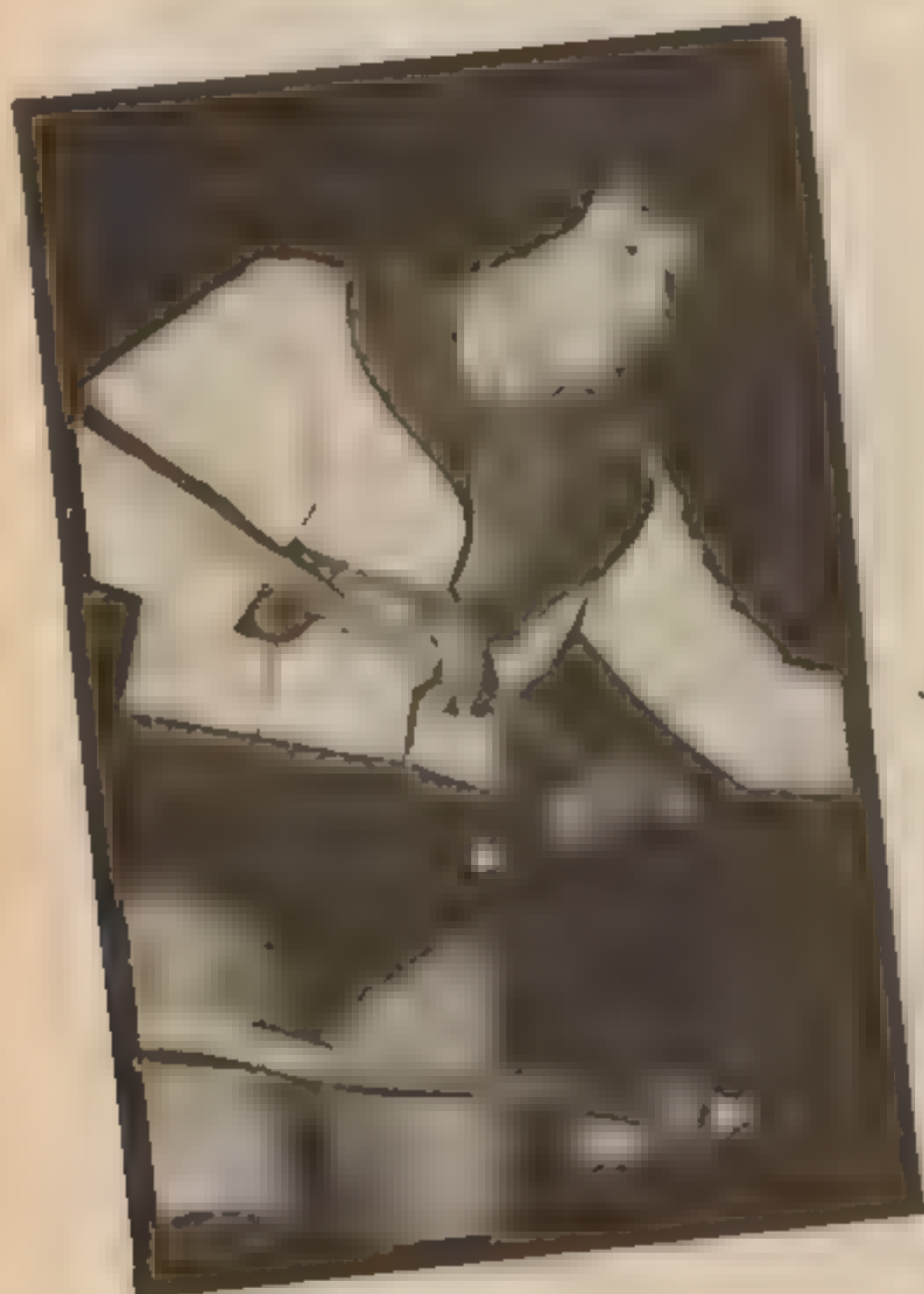
"What's wrong with them?" Grappler asked. "People who are jealous don't like winners and far as I can see, these guys know how to throw their weight around the ring."

Of course, neither Afa nor Sika cared to comment. But The Samoans don't need their mouths to convey the utter insanity of their lives.

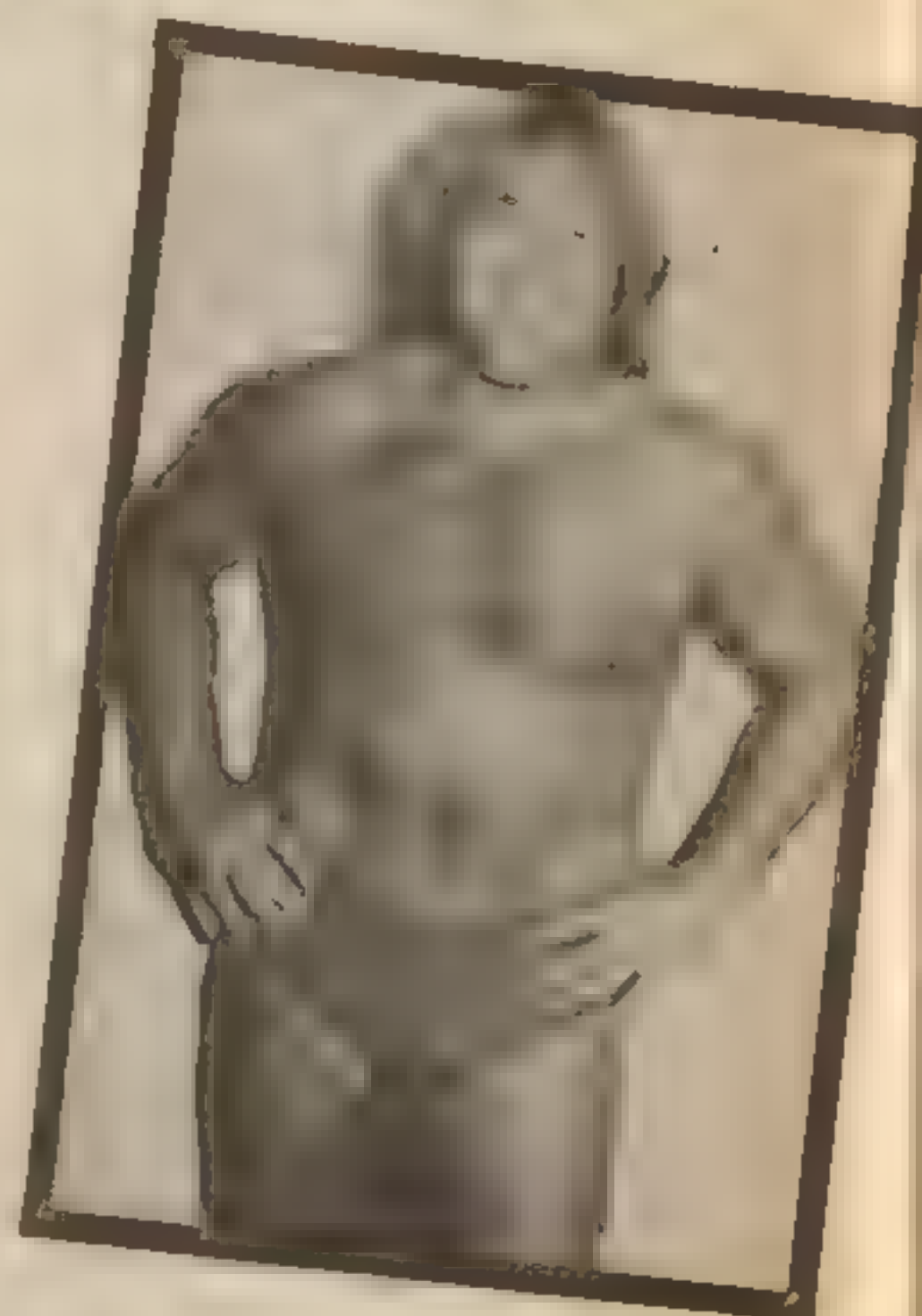
They have their deeds. And before they're finished, their deeds might lay the entire state of Louisiana to waste. □



# Ted DiBiase vs. Steve Keirn: **THE MATCH** **THE FANS FEARED**



The fans held their breath when Steve Keirn and Ted DiBiase climbed through the ropes, not as partners but as opponents. Wrestling has seen many scientific encounters become ugly brawls due to a flairing of temper. Would this happen again?



PHOTOS BY BRAD McFARLIN

**A** CROWD GATHERED around Ted DiBiase's car. Even before he stepped out, they bombarded him with pleas.

"Ted!" shouted an 18-year-old boy with sandy hair. "Please don't go bad."

"Teddy, don't do it, don't turn rulebreaker," screamed a blonde-haired girl in pigtails.

"You got the whole future before you, Ted, keep straight, keep straight, don't be bad," yelled a middle-aged housewife.

Ted DiBiase surveyed the mob of warmth pressing against him. He was puzzled. He had no idea why they were saying these

DiBiase and Keirn engage in a classic test of strength. Neither man kicked or punched to gain an advantage. This was as pure a wrestling match as the fans will ever see.





things to him.

A compatriot in bewilderment had encountered a similar reaction only moments before in the parking lot of the arena. When Steve Keirn emerged from his late model sports car, he, too, found himself swarmed by fans urging him to stay good.

"They pushed up against me," recalled Keirn, "Yelling and telling me how great I was. At first, I thought it was just the usual things fans yell. Then, I got confused.

"They were telling me that I shouldn't turn to rulebreaking, that I was a great scientific wrestler and all this. I had no idea what they were talking about. Why would I ever consider breaking the rules? My whole career has been founded on following the rules, on wrestling cleanly and respecting my opponent and the sport. I couldn't understand why, at least not until later when it dawned on me what they were talking about."

Since the epidemic of scientific wrestlers turning to rulebreaking afflicted pro wrestling, many fans have grown ultra-sensitive to any of their favorite becoming bad. They deeply fear a repeat of a Kevin Sullivan or Tommy Rich tale. Then, when it was announced DiBiase would wrestle Keirn, fans everywhere assumed one of them would blow his cool and resort to rulebreaking.

"Why would I ever do that?" asked a genuinely confused DiBiase.

The fans' reaction underlines a rather sad trend in wrestling. So many have turned bad that fans fear for even those most committed to scientific wrestling, like DiBiase and Keirn. They seem almost resigned to witnessing their favorites stabbing the public in the back.



Keirn whips DiBiase off the ropes and will greet him with a backdrop. Though the past records of these two men are spotless, most fans anticipated the worst. One man—or both—would surely break the rules.

Yet many now believe the best way to keep their favorites on the straight and narrow is to detonate any emotional explosives *before* the guy goes bad. That is why so many besieged Keirn and DiBiase.

"I know what happens when

two good guys go up against each other," said Tommy Wyeth, a 15-year-old fan of DiBiase. "They feel they gotta go rough. I sure don't want that happening to Ted."

As both DiBiase and Keirn  
(Continued on page 64)



**Unbelievable  
Violence!!!**



# **SHEIK BATTLES THE ANIMAL INSIDE A CAGE**

PHOTOS BY BRAD McFARLIN

**R**ECALLING THE RESPECTIVE careers of The Sheik and George "The Animal" Steele reads like an historical narrative of civil

insurrection or bulky FBI files. Riots. Bloodshed. Men hospitalized. Women carried from arenas on stretchers. Civilian petitions to ban them.

Police investigations

But nothing either madman has ever done compared with a recent night in Detroit. It was shocking. Gory. An un-





# ANIMAL

believable riotous wrestling bout.

"I don't like him, hey, him, the guy, him, The Sheik," hissed Steele in the locker before the match. Steele nibbled on a leather belt

"Sheik, him, that's right, that's his name, The Sheik, him, the guy I wrestle. I don't

Put George "The Animal" Steele and The Sheik into one arena, or even one city, and the violence explodes. These two men are incapable of ever stopping. All they know how to do is turn a civilized sport into World War III, as they recently did in Detroit



Was this the most violent match in wrestling history? Little else could be expected after promoters decided to lock George Steele and The Sheik inside a steel cage. Steele has Sheik almost beaten, but loses concentration when he takes time out to taste his own blood (above). Sheik is in agony as Steele crushes the Arabian into the metal barrier (left)

like him, why? Who. Who do you mean? Yeah, him, The Sheik. He is mean. He calls me names. I don't like when people call me names. I don't like that. He is mean. Hey, him, I will crush him until he cannot move. I will nibble and gnaw on his body until all he has, who, him, hey? All he has are his eyeballs and then I will eat them too, yum, yum, eyeballs, yummy."

Steele bit off a chunk of leather and chomped.

The Sheik would not even condescend to make remarks about Steele. His reply to any and all questions consisted of turning those dark Arabic eyes toward the questioner and dropping down his jaw to permit spittle to fall upon his chin. Then he turned away, muttering in a foreign dialect and spitting into his locker.

Any wrestling arena vibrates with tense anticipation before an exciting match. But this night in





Sheik's face betrays his fear as Steele is about to take a big bite out of the Arabian madman's leg. Note Steele licking his lips in preparation for his between-meal snack.

Detroit, there was an added spectator out front. Not anxiousness. Nor anticipation. But fear.

The history of Steele and The Sheik alarms most wrestling people. Many people fear that someday they will end a match with their opponent taken out of the arena and to the morgue. Forever. They go far beyond brutality. Far beyond violence. They attack like sub-human beasts intent on mindless destruction.

That is what stirs the crowd. Fear. And, since fear often attracts and repels, the spectators gathered in

Detroit shifted in their seats, wondering how they would keep their eyes on the match, wondering how they couldn't watch.

Very quickly into the match, the two men, and we use that word loosely, clawed and bit and punched and kicked like insane animals. The crowd cheered, booed, applauded, gasped. They did everything befitting a huge arena captivated by a glimpse into primitive behavior.

When action spilled out of the ring, bounced off the ring apron and into the front rows, the crowd cheered, screamed, ran away. But all those who

ran away eventually paused and looked back. Sheik and Steele continued battling, using everything tied down and not tied down as a weapon in their savage struggle.

Blood spewed out of massive cuts on their faces. Still they battled. Still the crowd cheered and jeered, leaping to their feet, waving fists, shouting out encouragement or distaste. But no one looked away.

Eventually the referee had to halt the war. A double disqualification was declared. The men were sent back, half-limping, growling to their





Above: The Animal bellows in pain as The Sheik grabs a handful of back hair and pulls. Below: A desperate Sheik takes the high ground in a vain attempt to escape this brutal match.

respective dressing rooms. And the crowd hooted, cheered, booed, applauded. Still they didn't stop looking.

Steele forced away attempts to stitch his wounds. He sat for a long while, started drinking disinfectant. He sat for a long while, staring off

"I want to kill that man, no, want to kill him, hey? Him. Hate him," muttered Steele. "Why? Dunno, just do, just hate him, just want him dead. Dunno? Call me names, say things, act mean to me, hey, dunno. Now? Kill now, no, too tired, too weary, no longer fight now, hurt too much, someday soon, again, will kill again."

The Sheik maintained an impassive facade while his personal Arab physician attended to him. He wouldn't answer any questions. All he did was stare. □



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## WHAT'S HAPPENING

(Continued from Page 8)

Killer Brooks. The entire family is in a slump!

Former NWA champion Tommy Rich is back on the title track once again. Tommy has won an elimination tournament to determine the new Georgia champion. The belt was vacated by Tony Atlas.

"This belt is a definite sign of better things to come," Tommy told me in an exclusive telephone interview just minutes after winning the belt. "I can taste that NWA title again. I know I can defeat Race again, and I hope I'll have the opportunity to do so soon."

Nikolai Volkoff and Sgt. Slaughter are negotiating with Mid-Atlantic promoters . . . Dory Funk Jr. has placed a \$25,000 bounty on the head of Dusty Rhodes. "Someone has got to stop this madman," Dory says. "He is hurting wrestling by trying to cripple and maim opponents. It's a service by me to our wonderful sport to offer this \$25,000 to get rid of this really big problem."



Junkyard Dog (above) and Dick Murdoch continue to hold the Mid-South tag team title.

Magnificent Muraco took Florida's television belt from Manny Fernandez. Manny has since left the area and is wrestling in Texas . . . The Bounty Hunters, one of wrestling's most feared teams, has entered Florida . . . Mid-Atlantic champion Ivan Koloff has dared WWF champion Bob Backlund to come and meet

him on his turf—title vs. title . . . Jack Brisco is teaming with Jerry "King" Lawler on occasion. "Jack's one of my favorite tag team partners," Jerry says.

The Assassins have dropped the North American tag belts to Mike Graham and Steve Keirn. "We was robbed!" Assassin #1 says. "It was a rotten deal," #3 adds. "The kid's father [Eddie Graham], paid the referee off. We are still the champions!" Not according to our ratings you're not! . . . Bobby Jagers has a brutal war going on against Bulldog Bob Brown. The veteran Brown claims, "I'll show that young punk who's boss!"

Ivan Putski is headlining cards in Houston, Texas, and the main object of his hatred was newly crowned AWA champion Nick Bockwinkel. "He'll be beggin' to retire the belt when he sees what I can do to him," Ivan says. "He's never had to contend with Polish Power before" . . . Tommy Gilbert is a new face to Florida fans . . . Buggy McGraw is negotiating with Tennessee promoters . . . Ken Patera is, concentrating on eliminating Ted DiBiase from the Georgia mat scene . . . Bruiser Brodie is running through all competition in Georgia.

The Samoans are hot on the trail of Mid-South tag team kings Junkyard Dog and Dick Murdoch.

Vicente Denigris, better known to wrestling fans as Argentina Apollo, is now a very prominent artist in Georgia. The star of the 1960s has his own gallery and runs exhibitions regularly . . . Finally, George "The Animal" Steele, whose favorite hobby is munching on turnbuckle stuffing, was almost arrested after chewing up the seats of a bus in New Jersey. Georgie avoided the arrest when he agreed to pay for the new upholstery.

That's all for now. See you at the matches! □



## YOU ASKED US

(Continued from Page 12)

it all sunk in and I knew I had won the title. There are no words to describe the feelin'. It's the greatest sensation in the world."

\*\*\*

Q: Who does Rick Steamboat say was his toughest opponent?—Jerry Last, Richmond, VA

A: "I would have to believe Ric Flair gave me my toughest matches," said the popular Steamboat. "I'm really glad we're both on the same side of the fence these days."

\*\*\*

Q: Now that he's been in the WWF for a few months, how does Dusty Rhodes rate the competition up here?—Janie Gross, Willingboro, NJ

A: We caught up with the "American Dream" after a rugged match in upstate New York. "The competition up here is brutal," Rhodes said. "Guys like Muraco, Mosca, Slaughter, damn, these dudes should be in padded cells, not wrestling arenas. But as tough as they are, the Dream is even tougher."

\*\*\*

Q: Could you ask Fritz Von Erich which one of his sons he thinks is the best wrestler?—U.D. French, Dallas, TX

A: "I think Mr. French is asking the wrong guy," responded Fritz. "I'm so close to every one of my sons it's impossible for me to pick one of them over the others. Actually, I'm delighted at the progress all three of them have made over the past couple of years." □

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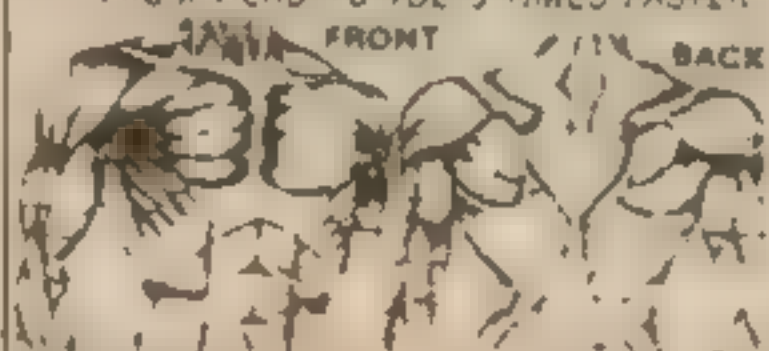
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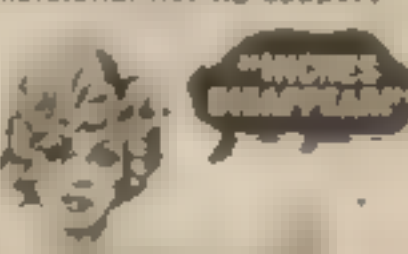
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## CORRESPONDENT REPORTS

(Continued from Page 10)



A bloody Harley Race departs the ring after being intentionally disqualified in his match against Bruiser Bob Sweetan.

conquered Mr. Onita, Masa Fuchi, and Tojo Yamamoto . . . Eddie Gilbert won by disqualification over The Turk . . . Sonny King downed El Toro.

**LITTLE ROCK, AR—Correspondent: Glenn Bryant:** Harley Race put his NWA belt on the line

against Bruiser Bob Sweetan. Race assaulted his challenger with reverse suplexes, piledrivers, and backdrops. Yet, several times Sweetan came within an instant of pinning the champion. In desperation, Race tried another piledriver, only to find it reversed. In the melee, the referee was accidentally knocked unconscious. Seeing this, Race leaped over the rope and fled the ring. The referee saw Race hurl himself over the top rope and stopped the match, awarding it to Sweetan.

In other bouts, Tom Jones barely beat Billy Starr . . . Mike George threw Ricky Morton over the top rope and was disqualified . . . Frank Hill and Tom Jones won the Tri-State tag team title from Jerry Brown and Ron McFarlane.

**ASHEVILLE, NC—Correspondent: Brenda Medford:** The TV title was on the line when champion Sweet Ebony Diamond defended his belt against Greg Valentine. Despite Valentine's



Sweet Ebony Diamond successfully defended his TV title with a hard-fought victory over Greg Valentine.



Terry Gordy and Buddy Roberts, but Junkyard Dog and Dick Murdoch came to Ted's rescue. Still, Hayes dominated the match. Then, DiBiase reversed the action by smashing Hayes twice into the ringpost. Weakened, Hayes proved powerless against DiBiase's brilliant attack. Ted caught Hayes in a figure-four leglock, and it looked like the end. That's when Roberts and Gordy rushed back to save Hayes. Junkyard Dog and Murdoch then came in to help DiBiase, causing Hayes and his companions to flee. The match was awarded to Ted DiBiase.

In other action, Super Destroyer took the Louisiana title from Jim Garvin. Masked Grappler retained his North American title by turning back Ted DiBiase's challenge . . . Kerry Von Erich won by disqualification over Ernie Ladd . . . Junkyard Dog and Dick Murdoch conquered The Freebirds . . . The Samoans beat Jake Roberts and Don Diamond. □

**SHREVEPORT, LA—Correspondent:** Doug Martin—The Coliseum was the site of a “lights out” match between Ted DiBiase and Michael Hayes. A lights out match can only end when one of the wrestlers is unconscious, and the two enemies appeared to relish the prospect. At first, Hayes got help from the other Freebirds,

Ted DiBiase seems on the verge of defeat, but he miraculously regained enough strength to continue his grudge match against Michael Hayes. DiBiase was declared the winner when Hayes' Freebird partners interfered in the match.

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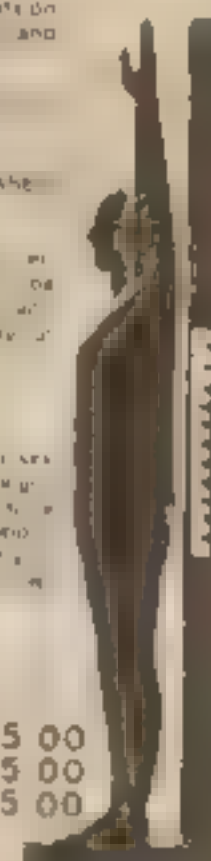
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## THUMBS UP, THUMBS DOWN

(Continued from Page 18)



**THUMBS DOWN** to Sir Oliver Humperdink: That a man with such an obviously brilliant mind should be plotting devious routes to success is very, very sad. If he cannot be successful within the confines of the rules governing this sport, maybe he's not as brilliant as everybody thinks.

**THUMBS UP** to Junkyard Dog: After going through the horrible experience of a second serious eye injury at the hands of The Freebirds, it's a wonder that this man doesn't call it a career and live his life off his vast earnings. Dog won't leave the sport, however, while men like The Freebirds run amuck. He has vowed revenge, and you can bet this dog will have his day.



**THUMBS DOWN** to Killer Khan: This man is a disgrace to all of wrestling and society. His dastardly attack on the great Andre the Giant strikes a severe blow at the scientific wrestling effort. Andre's leg will heal, but the effects on the sport might be far more reaching. Khan must be stopped.

**THUMBS UP** to Blackjack Mulligan Jr.: It took a lot of guts for Mulligan to use a false identity when he could have taken the easy route by using the well-known name of his father. But Mulligan Jr. was determined to carve his own niche in the world of wrestling. It was his proudest moment when he realized there was no longer a need to use the name Barry Windham.





## Q & A

(Continued from Page 21)



Race believes that Ted DiBiase might one day have what it takes to be NWA champion

from Baba, Rhodes, and Rich you were a perfect fighting machine. What do you do to reach these unbelievable heights?

**A:** I sit alone in my hotel room and think. You know, losing the belt is not such a traumatic experience. It happens. After Rich won it in Augusta, I remember kneeling on the canvas, true I was stunned, but I had the presence of mind to know I would regain it. From the second the referee handed my belt to Rich to the instant I won it back, beating him was all that was on my mind.

**Q:** Some wrestlers go into a shell after a big loss.

**A:** Correct. But not me. Others immediately run to the gym, and all that leads to is confusion. They end up changing what they do best. Me, I sit by myself, take the phone off the hook, and get angry. I don't like punks wearing my NWA belt.

**Q:** Harley, thanks for being with us. And congratulations on winning the NWA title six times.

**A:** That's better. ☐

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## HUMPERDINK

(Continued from Page 33)

the one who's responsible for their success or failure. I'm the one who makes up the strategies, who picks the opponents, who nurses them, guides them."

Under the twisted direction of Humperdink, this "House" has gone completely crazy. Any member of the house who climbs into the ring guarantees for an astonished arena audience an evening of shock and treachery. Though their tactics may, at times, differ the results are always the same.

Like Sgt. Jacques Goulet, current Southern champion

"I am proud of my association with Mr. Sir Oliver Humperdink," he said. "I think he is a brilliant man. And we agree on one thing and one thing only—winning is all that counts. No matter what must be done, no matter what tactics I must adopt in the squared circle, I want victory."

Two more of Humperdink's men, the Masked Assassins, hold the North American tag team title and similar viewpoints.

"We know the Humperdink mind," said Masked Assassin #1. "We know what must be done in the ring. We enter each match prepared to destroy our foes. To be honest, we're getting really tired of wrestling the same creeps over and over again."

Masked Assassin #3, co-holder of the prestigious belt, echoes his partner's ugly words.

"I think it's just a matter of time before we have destroyed all vestiges of competition in Florida," he said. "Not that we had any competition to begin with. You can't honestly say that bums like Sweet Brown Sugar or retards like Steve Keirn are competition. To us, they're cannon fodder. You load up your wrestling gun and use them for target practice. We



Mr. Pogo, one of the most vicious wrestlers ever to reach our shores from the Orient, tortures the popular Fernandez.





R.T. Tyler has been receiving what he calls "sound advice" from Humberdink. Tyler drags Dusty Rhodes across the mat by his hair.

gotta believe that the best and toughest matches we ever have are in the gym, when we're practicing and wrestling among ourselves. A guy like Sugar is so slow and stupid, he reacts to a move an hour after you execute."

But contrary to those words, there is competition in Florida. Determined men intent on halting the madness sweeping the state. Men like Sweet Brown Sugar and Steve Keirn, willing to sacrifice everything to stop this plague.

"I don't think I care about myself anymore," said Sugar. "I look around and see those animals let loose and I'm determined to end their careers. You just can't let them run crazy. We gotta do something."

"I'd sacrifice a limb if that would end their careers once and for all," said Keirn. "As far as I can see, they're not only endangering me, they're threatening the whole sport and that must be dealt with harshly. No mercy for Humberdink's men. Right now, it's us or them, and I don't plan on losing." ☐

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# Tommy Rich

(Continued from Page 35)



Rich wins the title in spectacular fashion as he maneuvers out of an attempted suplex, bounds off the ropes, and flattens his dazed opponent (above). The prized NWA title was soon in his possession (below). Five days later, though, Race regained the belt, and many speculated that Tommy would feel the effects permanently. At press time, however, it was learned that Rich won the vacated Georgia heavyweight title in a one-day tourney.

know what to expect, anyway? I've never won the NWA belt, much less lost it."

Another friend thinks the trouble with Tommy started long before the title changed hands. "Tommy has always been more sensitive than the rest of us," he observes. "Look at that whole episode when he became a rule-breaker. Things didn't go his way so he flipped. Turned against his friends, the fans, and everything he believed in. He's too hard on himself. Always has been.

"This whole thing couldn't have happened at a worse time. He was just beginning to get himself on an even keel. He'd almost put the entire rulebreaker episode behind him. Now, who knows what the hell will happen?

In the best of all possible worlds,



Tommy will be stronger for the defeat. It will build character. Once he can accept defeat, he can really think about being champion. After

the shock wears off, he could be better than ever. But in case you haven't noticed, this isn't the best of all possible worlds."

Other friends are just as worried but less pessimistic. One points out, "How can you expect him to be anything but depressed? He just lost the NWA title in record time. That's going to be in the history books forever. His great-grandchildren are going to see that. Here's a trivia question: 'Who's held a major wrestling title for the shortest time?' Answer: Tommy Rich.

"I think it's a credit to the man that he just didn't quit and find another job. That's what I thought he was going to do, and I wouldn't blame him for a minute. Still, he's sticking in there.

"He has a right to walk around with his head in a sling for awhile. The pain will pass. It always does. I wouldn't be surprised if he takes the title back within a year.

"Yeah, I've heard him say things like he didn't know if he was meant to be champion? What do you expect him to say, 'Whoopee, I lost?' Hell, no. What a man says to his friends in private is often just his worst fears spoken aloud. That's what friends are for—to tell you your worst fears are groundless. He wasn't really scared. He was just looking for support."

When Tommy was approached for this article, he listened without comment to the above observations. When they were over, he silently turned and walked toward the door. He opened it slightly, then purposefully turned around.

"I can't tell you what will happen tomorrow. But I can promise you I'm not through. I know that for certain. I'm not through."

With that, he opened the door and left. All that remained behind him was an echo of uncertainty. □



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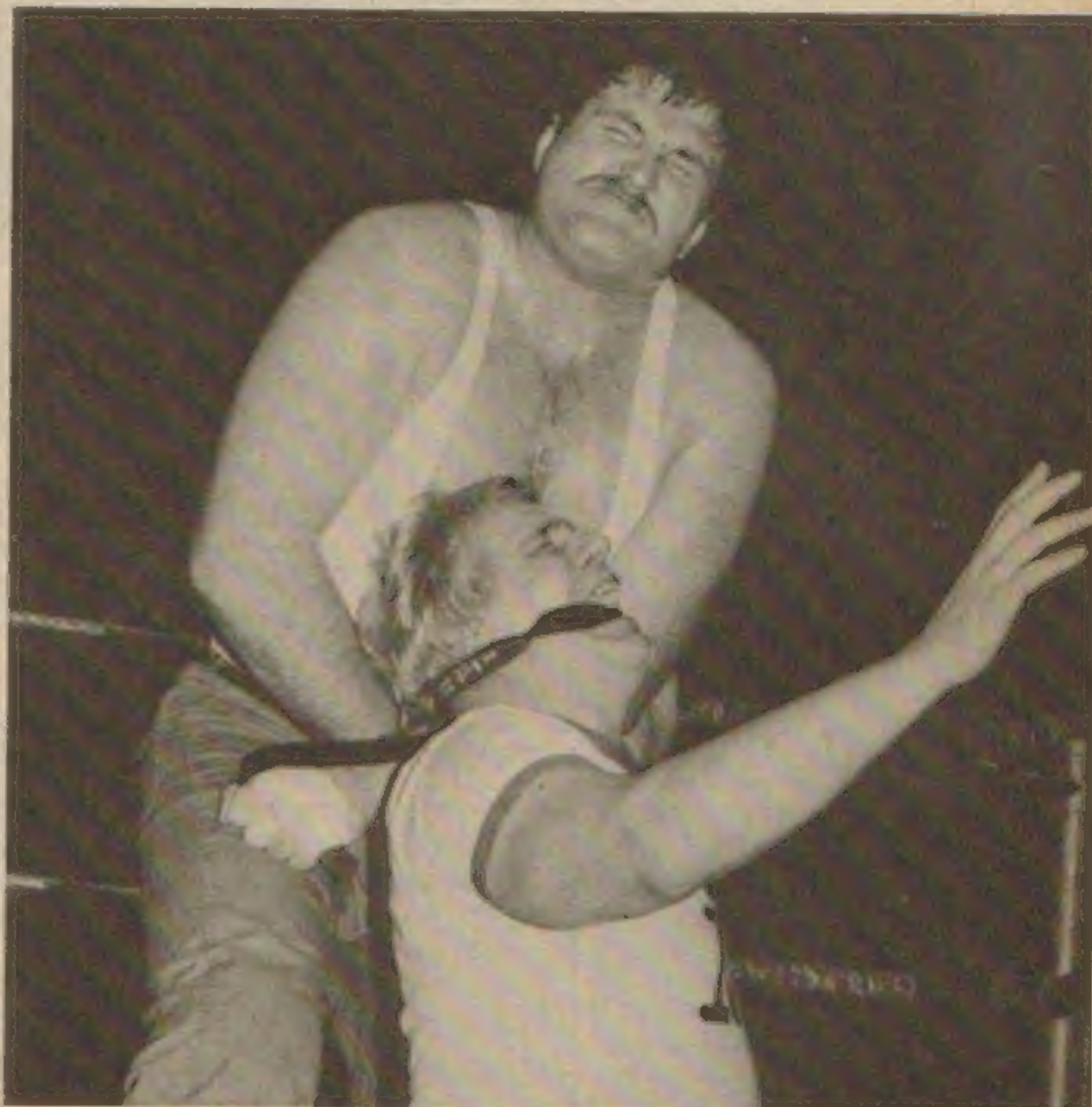
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## STREETBRAWL

(Continued from Page 37)



Slaughter momentarily silences Patterson, but he cannot silence his attack. Both wrestlers battled like savages and both spilled blood. Many wrestlers and fans were outraged that this match took place.

Finally, out of compassion for his wrestler, Grand Wizard threw in the towel. It was the only honorable act all night. Though Slaughter gave an appearance of being angry at his manager's decision, few doubted that he was relieved.

Everyone was glad the match had ended. The commissioners left the arena tightlipped and pale, refusing to answer any and all questions. Others were willing to talk, in fact eager to have the chance to express their rage.

Bruno Sammartino corralled a reporter. "I want to go on record," he fumed, "as opposed to this kind of animal exhibition. I'm proud to be a professional wrestler. It takes skill, intelligence, and dedication.

This disgrace took nothing but a strong stomach. As a wrestler, I'm ashamed for both men. I'm also ashamed for the sport. I've been in tough matches, bloody matches, even some battles I'm not too proud of. I've lost my temper plenty of times. But this . . . *this inhuman brawl* . . . this has nothing to do with wrestling. If either man wrestles like this again, he should be immediately banned for life. Not suspended, not fined, but *banned for life*. I feel dirty after watching this."

Other wrestlers were quick to echo Bruno's sentiments. Even Stan Hansen, no friend of Patterson and considered one of the most ruthless wrestlers around, was shocked by the spectacle.



"I'd thought I'd seen it all," Hansen murmured, "but this was something else. I never want to see anything like it again. It was *disgusting*. I thought I could take anything. Well, this proved me wrong.

"Look, if these guys want to kill each other, there are plenty of alleys around. Why don't they do it right? Can't they find a couple of 2 x 4s and really do the job? This has nothing to do with wrestling. I don't know what it has to do with. I don't want to know."



Patterson drives the heel of his boot into Slaughter's open wound. The Grand Wizard wisely threw in the towel.

Fans repeated similar sentiments. An ashen-faced young man, a linebacker on his college football team, was too sickened to talk. Another man simply stated, "I love wrestling, the rougher the better, but I hope I never see anything like this again."

Two days later, the wrestling commissioners officially vowed never to have another match like this again. An hour later, Slaughter said he's determined to wrestle Patterson again. What results from this challenge will test the commissioners much more than either Patterson or Slaughter. ☐

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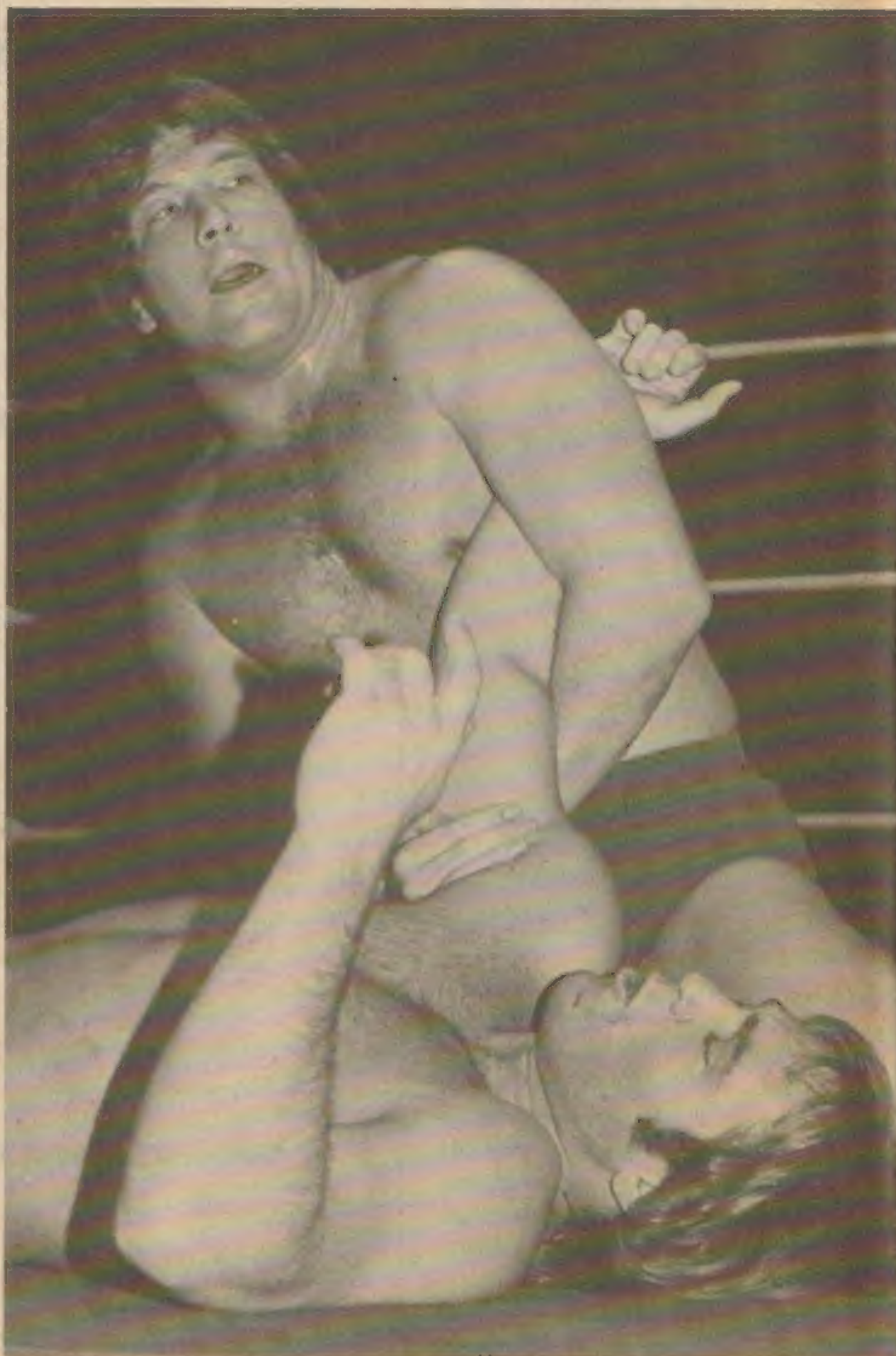
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## Ted DiBiase - Steve Keirn

(Continued from Page 45)



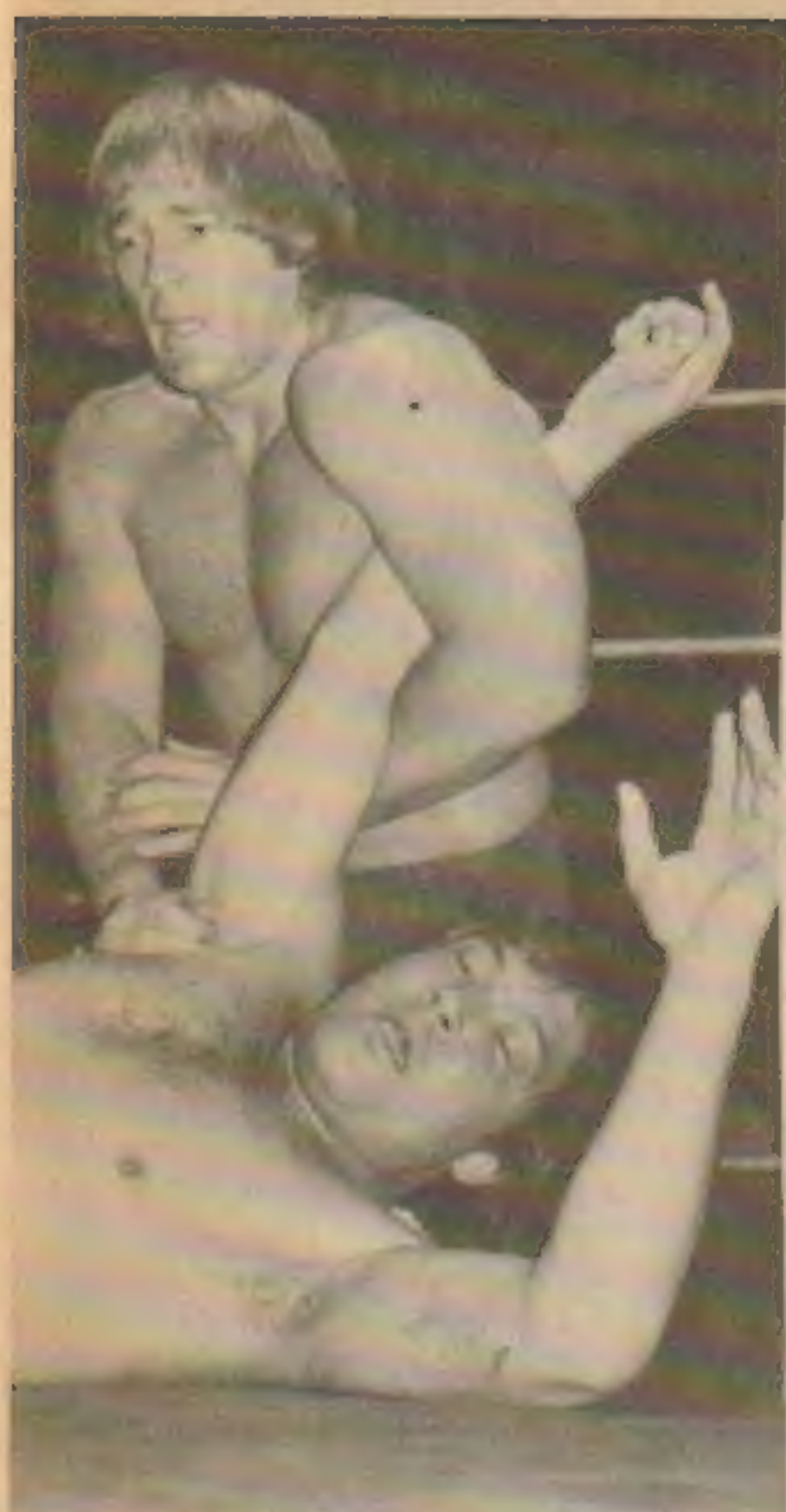
The fans' worst fears were never realized. Despite feverish intensity, at no time was there a breakdown of order during this battle. DiBiase and Keirn are consummate professionals, and they acted accordingly throughout.

made their way down the aisle to the ring, fans on all sides screamed out encouragement. It was at that point DiBiase realized what was happening.

"I was very touched," said DiBiase. "For my fans to show that much faith in me really

made me feel very good. But they should never worry. I am never going to turn bad. I don't care if the whole blasted wrestling world goes bad, Ted DiBiase will never be a bad guy. Besides, I have a world of respect for Steve. I was really





Whoever invented the sport of wrestling so many years ago would have been proud of the way these two men handled themselves. "No filth, no cheating, none of that garbage," noted DiBiase.

looking forward to this match."

And in this match, the worst fears of the fans were erased. DiBiase and Keirn wrestled with matchless scientific brilliance, displaying a wide host of maneuvers and counter-maneuvers, almost as if they were holding class on the way people should wrestle.

"You know, in a way, I felt even more pressure because of what the fans feared," said Keirn. "I wanted to go even harder to show them how disciplined and fair-minded I was, and I'm sure Ted felt the same way."

"Absolutely," said DiBiase. "This is the way wrestling should be. No filth, no cheating, none of that garbage. Just two guys going all out to wrestle the very best they can, and may the best man win."

When the time limit bell rang, both men won. ☐

# PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED

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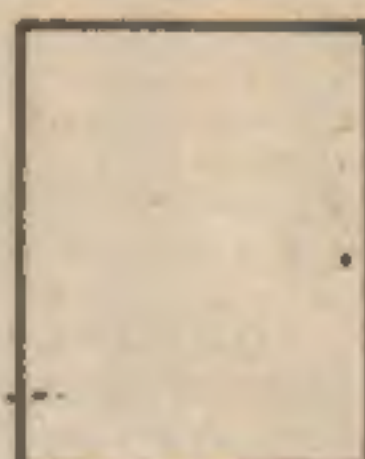
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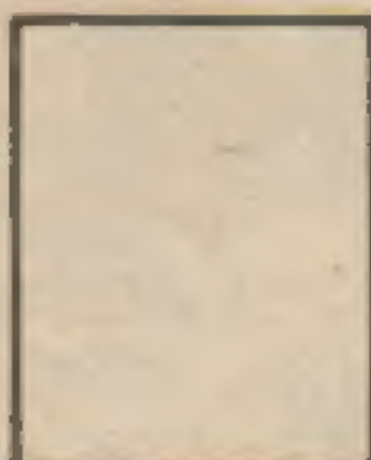
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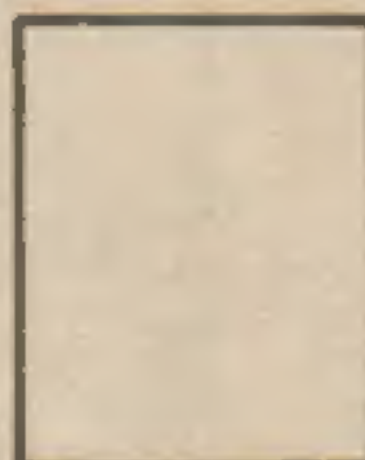
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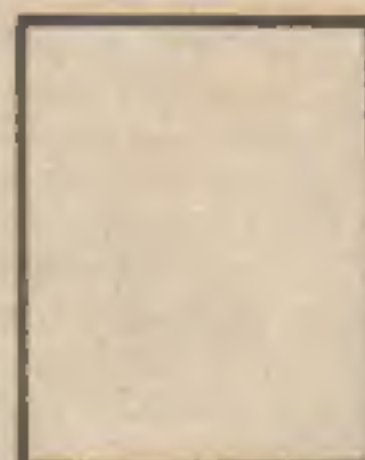
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